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For Every Mac User

Tips

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Troubleshoot Your Mac
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Make Custom Letterhead
Design an Ergonomic Office
and More...

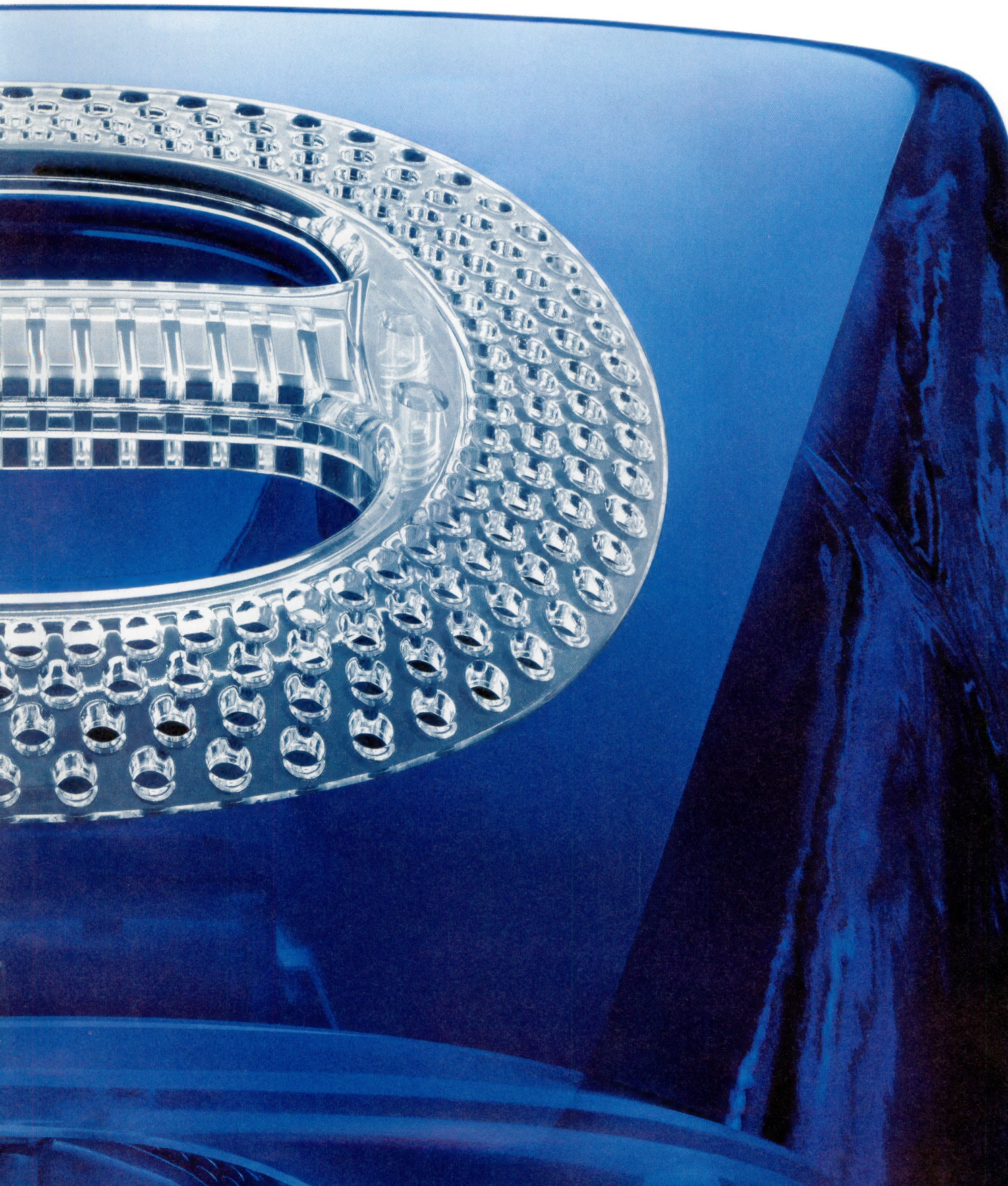
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The Tips Issue

Tips Extravaganza! _____ 16

From the editors of MacHome

Ever wonder how to close every window on your Mac with just one click? Or how to turn your PowerBook into a FireWire disk? Or how to update all your system software with a single click? We'll tell you how to do all this, and so much more, in our 8th annual roundup of tried-and-true tips.

I Want My ISP! _____ 24

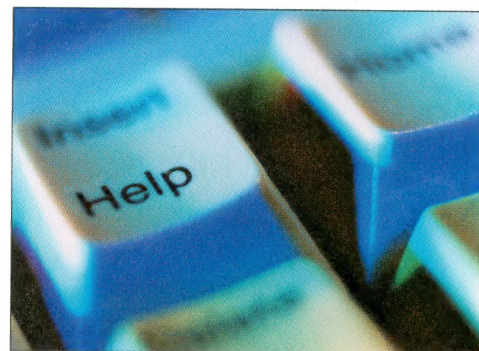
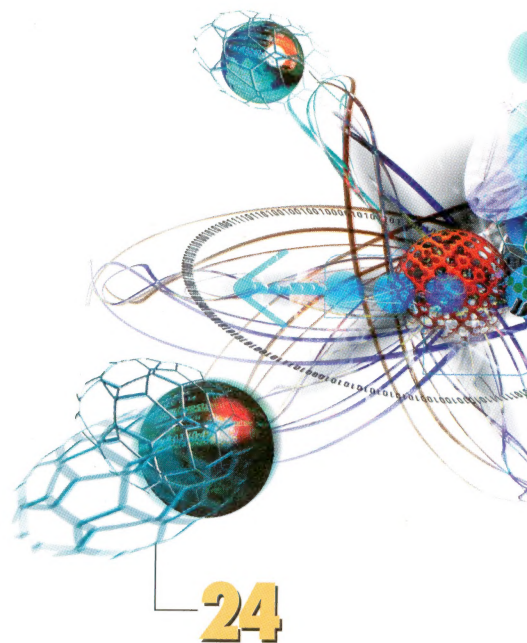
By Jeff Battersby

With all those Internet Service Providers out there, how do you pick the best one to suit your needs? Which one has the best features? Which has the best Mac support? We'll help by taking a close look at four national, Mac-friendly ISPs.

Troubleshooting from the Hip _____ 28

By Chris McVeigh

Trouble? We all encounter it every now and then. But we'll tell you how to keep your cool and zap your trouble before it zaps you. We'll teach you how to isolate problems, how to fix them, and how to prevent them from happening in the future. Read this article and you'll be a Mac Whiz in no time flat.



NewsWire

Read all about it: news, products, rumors, gossip, quotes, and innuendo

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HP's Consumer DeskJet
Microsoft Office 2001
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Cool Kodak Shooters
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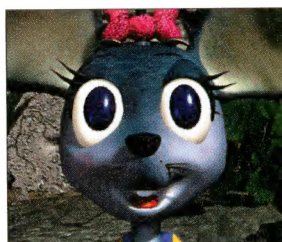
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- ★★★★ SynchMaster 900NF
- ★★★★ ScanMaker 3600
- ★★★★ I X-keys

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- ★★★★ Clan Lord
- ★★★★ I F/A-18 Korea Gold
- ★★★★ Traitors Gate

Your Family

- ★★★★ I Backyard Baseball 2001
- ★★★★ I Dinosaur Activity Center
- ★★★★ Golf Personal
- ★★★★ Mia 2: Romaine's New Hat

Our Rating System

- ★★★★★ **Mac-nificent.** You gotta get it. No flaws.
- ★★★★ **Excellent.** Recommended even if it has a minor flaw or two.
- ★★★ **Average.** Despite problems, still a worthwhile product.
- ★★ **Below Average.** Has serious flaws that limit its usefulness or fun.
- ★ **Poor.** Avoid this product at all costs.



Indicates iMac/G3 compatibility

Mac-Spotting

For those with a profound interest in locomotives, few activities can provide the deep satisfaction of train-spotting. And similarly, we Mac enthusiasts often find ourselves plunging inadvertently into the pleasant practice of Mac-spotting.

The idea of train-spotting is simple: Grab a notebook, head out to the tracks, and log the engine numbers of the trains that pass by. The thrill — deep down, and subtle though it may be — is to catch that elusive rare one, or to spot every single engine in a series. As you

train-spot, you also get to adopt a posture of aloof serenity, as you stand detached from the mad rush, unfettered by the usual, mundane preoccupations with arrivals, departures, destinations, and time.



dw@machome.com

Mac-spotting is less methodical and much subtler, requiring just a short mental note: "Four iMacs in the lobby of a museum — *spotted* ... six iMacs in an Internet café — *spotted* ... lime iMac in a primarily Irish-run furniture store — *spotted*." Macs are everywhere, but when we happen upon them, they inspire a spark of recognition. That's just the nature of Macs — like movie stars, they were born to be spotted.

The seasoned Mac-spotter will regularly take note of Mac cameos in films and on TV. Did you catch the PowerBook in *Mission Impossible 2*? Wasn't it so very apt that the same hero who defeats all

possible odds by means of video sunglasses, a wireless, pea-sized walkie-talkie, and handheld video-transfer gear, would also employ a PowerBook G3/500MHz for his heavy-duty computing? (Don't ask me how I know he used the 500MHz version — of *course* he used the latest, fastest model.)

You can engage in Mac-spotting at any time, and when you least expect it. In my usual morning stupor, coffee cup in hand, as I gaze over the paper, I'm often relieved by a pleasant jolt every time I come across a Mac in the comics. So far, I've spotted them in Doonesbury, Sally Forth, and Non Sequitur. How fitting — in addition to their more glamorous appearances, Macs are starting to be used as the very icon for "computer," in settings which often portray us regular folks sittin' around at home.

Why do we engage in this automatic, apparently self-congratulatory exercise? We just can't help it; as Macs become increasingly popular, we love to see them take on lives of their own in the world and in the popular imagination. So keep an eye out!



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BELKIN

Drive Carefully

As a product developer and longtime subscriber to *MacHome Journal*, I read with interest the short review of the recently announced Western Digital FireWire drive in the July issue. Let me first applaud Western Digital's effort, and welcome them to the growing family of vendors providing innovative FireWire solutions.

Unfortunately, the review included factual errors and unfair, irrelevant comparisons to various VST products. Your article should have simply reviewed their product on its own merits, and saved comparisons for a future, properly done review on a level playing field. Here are some clarifications and corrections:

1) The price of the 20GB full-height Western Digital drive was compared to that of the VST 18GB half-height product. This is unfair because half-height mechanisms are always more expensive. They are designed for portables, and are miniaturized at a premium in cost. They can also withstand much more shock. For an apples-to-apples comparison, the writer ought to have used the VST 20GB full-height version, which is only slightly more expensive.

2) The performance of the Western Digital 20GB Full-Height drive was compared to a VST half-height 2GB drive that VST shipped more than a year ago (April, 1999). This was our entry level FireWire drive, and it's been out of production since last summer. Had the appropriate VST model been used, it would have compared much more favorably — it's a 7,200RPM hard drive, whereas the Western Digital drive is a 5,400RPM mechanism.

3) You mentioned the Western Digital's software, but didn't mention that it's a "lite" version of VST's own software. VST ships the fully enabled "Pro" version (called VST Format) with all VST FireWire products. Firmware updates, HotPlug Events, and

data encryption are just a few of the additional features offered only with VST's FireWire disk utility.

MacHome Journal has always been at the leading edge of Apple's consumer product coverage. We hope you will present a reasonable clarification and fairly documented correction with respect to your recent review. Thank you.

Vincent Fedele,
Chief Technology Officer,
VST/SmartDisk Personal Storage Systems

✍ Vincent, you're absolutely right — mea culpa! In choosing the closest comparable FireWire drive, the less expensive, full-height, desktop models had completely slipped my mind. And for comparing speed, I automatically picked up the old 2GB version, mainly because it's been sitting right on my desk since it was first introduced. In response to your letter, we've tightened our fact-checking process, and substantially revised our reviews policy — from now on, short reviews will focus only on the product being reviewed, and we'll reserve any product comparisons for our Face-Off reviews.

For ratings of the latest VST FireWire drives, please see www.machome.com/features/PowerBook. For more on VST, stop by www.vsttech.com.

— Editor

Thanks, Kensington! (Open Letter)

I am enclosing for return the Kensington TurboRing together with its software CD. This unit was unsatisfactory because the trackball slips and I was unable to make the Scroll ring work. A replacement unit has already been received and is in service. This was arranged by phone through your technical support person, Jason. My warmest congratulations and thanks to Jason for handling my problem so smoothly with minimum effort. I wish all technical



support people were as helpful.

And, thanks to Kensington for such a user-friendly policy on return of merchandise. Your reputation is very well-deserved. I wish all software and hardware manufacturers were as helpful.

— Howard Paul Hogshead

True Confessions

Recently, I was considering buying a new computer. If I get a Mac, I'll have access to fewer games, since they don't make as many games as they do for PCs. I was considering Virtual PC at first, but I read an article that said it was complicated to use, and it slowed down your computer's speed by half. Do you think a PC compatibility card from Apple would work better?

— Chenghao Gao, *Game Addict*

✍ In a word, yes. Hardware is always better than software, when it comes to heavy-duty processing. In this case, a PC compatibility card, such as the ones offered by Orange Micro (www.orangemicro.com), actually puts a PC's brain into your Mac. MHJ

write to us...

Please write us with your comments! All letters are assumed intended for publication and may be edited. You can reach us by snail mail at: 703 Market Street, Suite 535, San Francisco, CA 94103 or by email:

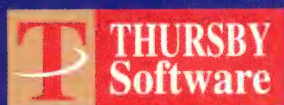
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September 2000



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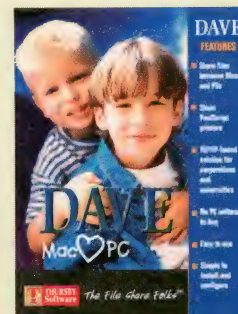
www.thursby.com

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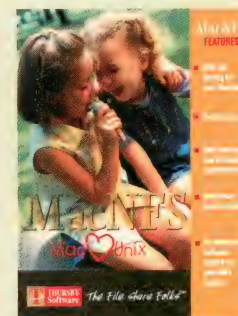
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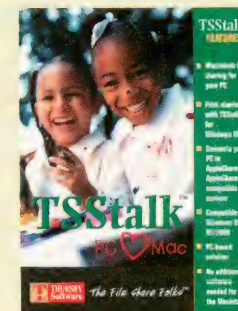
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The fast, easy way to share
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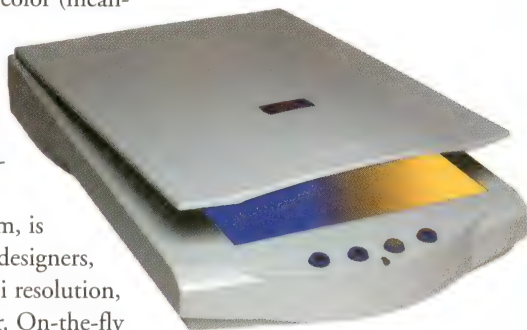
Windows users can access
files on any Mac workstation
or AppleShare server.

Y'all Want Scanners?

Never (well, hardly ever) has there been a more diversified market for an array of hot scanners, and new ones are being introduced every day.

Let's start with Microtek, which has introduced the ScanMaker 3700 (\$120) and the ScanMaker 4700 (\$279). The 3700, targeted toward consumers, is a 1,200 x 600 dpi color flatbed scanner with push-button, Web-ready features and 42-bit color (meaning trillions of colors!).

You can use the scanner to copy images via your printer or attach photos to your email messages. The 4700, on the higher end of the spectrum, is designed for professional designers, scans at 2,400 x 1,200 dpi resolution, and gives you 42-bit color. On-the-fly image compression lets you scan and save large files faster. Both models, which feature an 8.5 x 11.7-inch scan bed, ship with a transparency adapter for 35mm slides and filmstrips, and connect via USB.



Umax has come out with several new models that span a range of prices and features. The Astra 3400, a 600 x 1,200 dpi scanner for \$99, features 42-bit color as well as what Umax calls an Intelligent Image Process Engine that automatically detects whether your image should be scanned as color, grayscale, or black and white. It also determines optimal resolution, crops, and rotates. Push buttons let you scan and copy, and create email or OCR (optical character recognition) text. A separate power button turns off the scanner lamp between scans, thus saving power.

But Umax has other treats in store. There's the Astra 6400 for \$249 and 6450 for \$299, both with FireWire connections that will make quick work of your scanning.

Both scanners feature 600 x 1,200 dpi optical resolution, and 42-bit color. Both come with Photoshop LE. Consider the 6450 if you need the transparency cover for slides and negatives.

Get ready for the tiniest, lightest, cutest li'l color flatbed USB scanners you've ever seen. They're the CanoScan N650U (\$99), N656U (\$129), D660U (\$149), and N1220U (\$199). All feature 42-bit color. The N650U and the N656U are identical on the inside, but whereas the former comes in the traditional putty color, the latter sports a fashionable metallic finish (which will cost you an extra \$29).

The D660U, which ships in September, comes with a transparency adapter, that makes it somewhat fatter than the other ultra-slim models (which measure just over one inch in height). In terms of resolution, the first three scan at 600 x 1,200 dpi. All models except the D660U

Printing Pretty

Here's a printer for first-time buyers, students, and families: the HP DeskJet 648C for \$119. This USB printer cranks out six pages per minute (ppm) in black and three ppm in color. It runs on a dual print cartridge system, so you



can print in black or color without having to swap cartridges. The software automatically selects the optimal color or grayscale tone for smoother skin tones and solid backgrounds. The software even promises to enhance the quality of low-resolution images printed from the Internet.

Hewlett-Packard, 800-752-0900, www.hp.com

Wee Little Camcorder

We don't know how much it costs (yet), but we know it's cute and will be available in September.



Canon has introduced the Elura 2MC, a pocket-sized camcorder that weighs just over one pound.

It captures high-resolution digital video, features a 10X zoom lens, 40x digital zoom, image stabilization, a 2.5-inch view screen, stereo sound, and, of course, FireWire.

Canon, 800-652-2666,
www.usa.canon.com

Scanners (Continued)

sport the "Z-lid" expansion top, which lets you scan easily from books and magazines. For a scanner with more advanced optics, have a look at the N1220U, whose resolution is 1,200 x 2,400 and which

comes in the metallic exterior.

Hewlett-Packard has introduced the ScanJet 5370C for \$299, aimed at small-office and

home-office users who need

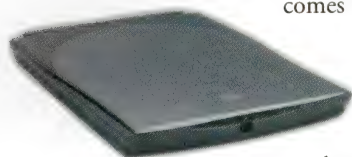
to scan slides, negatives, or transparencies. It features 1,200 x 2,400 dpi resolution and 42-bit color with a USB connection. Push-button functions let you scan, color copy, fax, and email.

Microtek Labs, 800-654-4160, www.microtekusa.com

Umax, 800-562-0311, www.umax.com

Canon, 800-652-2666, www.usa.canon.com

Hewlett-Packard, 800-752-0900, www.hp.com



Kodak's Sturdy Shooters

If you need to photograph in a challenging environment — on the streets, on a construction crew, in the cubicles of corporate America (just kidding!) — check out the Kodak DC5000 digital camera, which features a rugged, weatherproof body, and a powerful zoom lens. This camera is designed to be bounced around more than on your typical walk in the park or your kid's birthday party, and sports large controls that are easy to operate, even with gloves on.



An autofocus, autoexposure camera for \$699, the DC5000

comes with a built-in automatic flash

and lets you immediately review your shot on a 1.8" color LCD screen. No slouch on image quality, this camera has a 2-megapixel CCD (charge coupled device) that supports image resolutions of up to 1,760 x 1,168, a 2X optical zoom lens equivalent to 30mm to 60mm, and, for a little extra boost, a 3X digital zoom.

It ships with an CompactFlash card, four AA alkaline batteries, USB cables, software, and other accessories.

If you're a creative type who works in perhaps a more-refined environment, take a look at the Kodak DC4800 digital camera (\$899) scheduled to hit the streets in August. Made to resemble a traditional film camera, this 3.1-megapixel model features a 3X optical (28mm to 84mm) and 2X digital zoom, giving you prints of up to 11" x 14" in size. The camera features both automatic and manual settings along with ISO settings of 100, 200, and 400 give you more flexibility in diversified lighting and action situations.

Kodak, 800-235-6325, www.kodak.com

Template World

If you use Microsoft Office, but you're too busy to fiddle with page layouts, OfficeReady Family Essentials from Canon Software Publishing gives you professionally designed, ready-



to-use templates for both Word and Excel in Office 98. The 400 templates include categories such as education, awards and certificates, job search, personal expenses, and others.

The program, available for \$30, automatically loads with either Word or Excel and is

accessible through an on-screen toolbar. The program is especially useful if you want to integrate photographs into your documents, as the program includes 86 special templates with Photo Sockets (digital image placeholders). Add your images without ever leaving Word or Excel.

Canon Software Publishing,

800-385-2155, www.software.canon.com

Mucho Megapixels

If you're in the market for a really fine camera and don't mind spending a bit more for it, Canon has announced the EOS D30, a 3.25-megapixel camera for \$3,500. Scheduled for retail in the fall, it is highly portable with a dimension of 5.9" x 4.2" x 3.0" and weighs a little over a pound. Featuring interchangeable lenses it supports all Canon EF lenses and a variety of EOS accessories. The company's new CMOS imaging sensor gives you color prints up to 11 x 14 inches. This camera features fully automatic operation with 11 shooting modes, a three-point autofocus system, a 35-zone metering sensor linked to each focusing point, seven white balance modes, a USB interface, and flash.

On the other end of the spectrum, Agfa has introduced the \$149 ePhoto CL18, a palm-sized digital camera that shoots and stores 32 640 x 480-resolution images. That's a perfect size for email and the Web. It also gives you both digital still and video capture modes, a 45mm equivalent lens, a self-timer, and software.

Canon, 800-652-2666, www.usa.canon.com

Agfa, 888-281-2302, www.agfaus.com



A Switching We Will Go

If you've got lots o' Macs (well, maybe eight to start with) and you want to share a single mouse, monitor, and keyboard, check out Dr. Bott LLC's MoniSwitch Pro 8, which lets you share (you guessed it) eight USB computers. (There's also MoniSwitch 2 and 4 USB which lets you connect two or four Macs). You can use the unit, which sells for \$399, with any Macs that support standard video and hot-swappable USB. You get a standard VGA video interface, a compact casing that looks good with your G4, and the package includes all the necessary cables. An LED indicates the selected computer.



Dr. Bott is also shipping gHub, its 4-port USB hub in cool-looking silver or graphite (\$44), giving you a compact design as well as dual LEDs on each port. Other features include a choice between self-powered or bus-powered, and it supports full-speed and low-speed transfers.

Dr. Bott, 503-452-8101,
www.drbot.com

What Do You See?

A lot depends on your monitor. MAG Technology USA has introduced the 770FD, a 17-inch color monitor featuring a Sony FD Trinitron CRT (cathode ray tube). The display, which sells for \$269, is targeted toward desktop publishing professional and those who use high-end graphics and professional imaging applications. It features a .24mm dot pitch, a maximum resolution of 1,284 x 1,024 pixels, at a refresh rate of 65Hz. A self-diagnostic test monitors the display's performance in case of a glitch.

MAG Technology USA, 800-827-3998, www.maginnovision.com

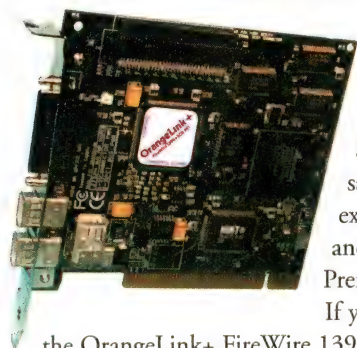
2001: A (Microsoft) Office Odyssey

It's here. It's Microsoft Office 2001 Macintosh Edition. And it's got a bunch of brand new features designed to make your life easier. The new version is designed to get you up and running faster in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. A new "Project Gallery," included in every application, assists you in getting started and determining which application to use. Office 2001 includes 400 customizable templates with wizards to help you create professional-looking documents such as invoices, catalogs, newsletters, and journals. Want to avoid those pesky dialog boxes? Each application includes a context-sensitive Formatting Palette displaying commonly used settings and tools to format text, images and documents. The Image Effects features, available throughout the suite, give you editing tools to correct and enhance your pictures.

Microsoft, www.microsoft.com/mac

It's in the Cards

Are you the type who gets excited by stuff like PCI cards? If so, then try to contain yourself with Orange Micro's brand new offerings. The company has announced a new USB 2.0 PCI card and USB 2.0 hub designed to support the new high-speed USB 2.0 peripherals. Both products will be available in October and will be backward compatible with all current USB 1.1 peripherals. Then there's the new OrangeLink+ FireWire 1394+SCSI U2W (that stands for Ultra 2 Wide!) PCI card,



for \$229, which the company recommends for desktop video aficionados. It gives you both a FireWire and a high-speed SCSI interface for rapid loading of movie clips, featuring transfer rates of 50MB per second via FireWire and 80MB per second via the SCSI connector. Having both connections on the same card saves you a PCI slot. The card features two external 6-pin FireWire ports, one internal 6-pin port and an optional internal power connector. Adobe Premiere LE is bundled into the package.

If you're trading large files over a network, have a look at the OrangeLink+ FireWire 1394+Ethernet PCI card for \$139. This card, which also saves you a PCI slot, features two external FireWire ports and an Ethernet port. Orange Micro, 714-779-2772, www.orangemicro.com

Attention Class!

Did you ever wish you could expand the functionality of your ordinary whiteboard to create, capture, store, and share project information, collaborations, and meetings, even over the Internet? Virtual Ink's mimio tool, for



\$499, does just that. mimio is a device you can attach to any whiteboard up to 8' x 4' and works with a small sleeve that fits over a standard dry-ink pen. Using infrared and ultrasound technology to track the position of your marker and

eraser, mimio captures everything you write or draw and exports it into your Mac. You can then revise, print, share, export to HTML, save images, or drag-and-drop your notes into any application. You can even collaborate with colleagues online in real time.

Virtual Ink Corp.,
617-623-8387,
www.mimio.com

Catch the Beat

You may have had the impression that creating animated Website banners was something best left to the pros. That may have been true in the past, but now Beatware has introduced two products, available in the third quarter, to add zing to your Website or presentation. eZ-Motion, for \$99, is an animation graphics program that lets you input and animate 3D objects and turn 2D text into 3D Web graphics. It comes with pre-loaded templates and professionally produced animations and artwork.

PowerMovie, a \$49 package targeted to Microsoft PowerPoint users, lets you compose and incorporate special effects and movies into slide shows, giving you additional visual effects and transitions. Available now for \$199 is e-Picture Pro, the company's professional Web animation graphics program. e-Picture Pro and eZ-Motion integrate with GoLive, Dreamweaver, and Microsoft FrontPage Web authoring tools, letting you work on your graphics within the page layout program.

BeatWare, 650-556-7906, www.beatware.com

Huuuuuuuuuge FireWire Drives

So you need something large enough to hold all your stuff. Enter EZQuest's new Cobra 45GB (\$599) and 60GB (\$699) FireWire hard drives.

Boasting transfer rates of up to 13MB per second, they feature dual 6-pin FireWire ports and internal power supply in a cool "ice" exterior.

EZQuest, 714-694-0031,
www.ezq.com

Microsoft **Office:mac** 2001



Rita

I need to communicate. With my office, my boss, my customers. My kids. I need words, numbers and pictures to speak their language. And a way to use them that's fast and fun. **Microsoft Office 2001.** All the essentials. Made easy. Made for my Mac.

microsoft.com/mac

Microsoft

Tips

From the Editors of *MacHome*

Extravaganza

109 **WAYS** to Get More from Your Mac

WE ALL LOVE OUR MACS BECAUSE THEY'RE SO EASY TO USE.

But beneath the surface there are hundreds of not-so-easy-to-find features — some deliberately hidden, some buried inside of menus, some activated by obscure keystrokes. We've put together some of the best of the Mac's "hidden secrets" — tips and tricks that will make your Mac experience the best it can be — more fluid, easier, and more fun. So without further ado, fasten your seatbelts for our 8th annual roundup of tips! (These work for Mac OS 8 through 9.04.)

TRIED-AND-TRUE TIPS

1 We'll start you off with a classic: To take a picture of everything on your desktop, hit Shift-Command-3, and keep an ear out for the sound effect! The picture will be stored in a file called "Picture 1" on your hard disk. This is excellent for capturing weird error messages verbatim.

2 If you want to capture only a certain part of your Mac's screen, rather than the entire desk-

top, press Shift-Command-4. Your cursor will change to a crosshair, and you can use it to select just what you want in your screen shot.

3 Hold down the Control key while clicking an icon, folder, or window, to bring up Contextual Menus — these are very smart little menus that give you a list of commands particular to whatever you're doing.

4 Tired of your screeching modem? Turn off the sound from the Modem control panel.

5 Want to find text on a Web page? Command-F (for Find) works in most of the popular browsers.

6 Most of the time you can select text that you come across on the Web, and copy and paste it into another application for later use.

7 Want to get better control over the many characters and symbols you can use with your Mac? Check out the Key Caps utility in the Apple menu. For even better control, down-

load the free Character Chooser from Letraset, at www.esselte.com/letraset/catch/characterchooser.html.

8 If you accidentally rename a file, press Command-Z to revert back to the original name. (This works while the name is still selected, but not after you click away.)

9 Is your iMac's screen not quite filling out to the edges? Head over to the Monitors control panel and click on the Geometry button. This will give you simple tools for adjusting your screen.

10 The Mac OS Help Center is an incredible resource, filled with interactive tutorials. Just click once on the Desktop so that the Finder appears in the upper-right, and call it up from the Help menu.

11 Sometimes your Mac will tell you that you can't empty the trash because some items are "in use." Just quit all of your apps, and then empty the trash.

12 Want to empty the trash, but your Mac tells you that something is "locked"? Just hold down the Option key and empty the trash again.

13 Did you know that when you copy files from one place to another, you don't have to wait for that process to finish before copying another file?

14 Protect files from being moved or trashed by clicking "Locked" in the ever-helpful Get Info box (Select a file, press Command-I).

15 Macs can easily read PC-formatted disks (floppies, Zips, CDs) without any additional software. That makes it easy to transfer cross-platform files, such as JPEGs, Word files, Photoshop files, and many others.

16 If you want to open a group of programs together, make aliases of them (Select and hit Command-M), select them all, and double-click.

WEB BROWSING TIPS

1 When browsing the Internet, you may encounter changed links. You can often find the correct page by deleting chunks of type from the location line. For example, if you dial up www.machome.com/colors/green and get a Not Found message, try subtracting the word "green." For longer URLs, keep subtracting words between the slash marks until you get a page you can use or the site's home page.

2 Like that picture you just saw online? You can save it onto your own computer. In Netscape Navigator, drag it to your desktop; In Microsoft Internet Explorer, click and hold your mouse button, then choose Download Image to Disk.

3 Sometimes you just gotta wait. But when it comes to surfing the Web, waiting can be intolerable. So if you get hung up waiting for the text of a page to appear, just hit the Stop button. Chances are the text was waiting for something else (such as a graphic) to download.

4 For quick access to a list of all of your favorite spots on the Web while using Internet Explorer, put an alias of your Favorites (System Folder > Preferences > Explorer > Favorites.html) on your desktop. Once opened, you can access all bookmarks directly without resorting to the use of menus.

5 When searching the Internet using Sherlock (Hit Command-F and then click on the picture of the Earth) you can save

all of your found URLs. After running a search, just hit Command-A (Select All), and then Command-C (Copy); it will appear as though you've copied just the page titles. But go into Word or SimpleText, and hit Command-V (Paste), and you'll see that you've captured every single URL.

6 If you encounter a slow Web page, you could wait — or you could load another page in the meantime. Choose New Window from the File menu in your browser (or hit Command-N) and go elsewhere. Or, use the Go menu to return to a previous page while the slow page keeps chugging.

7 Your browser is a very versatile application — it can display many kinds of text, movies, or images. Choose Open File from the File menu in most browsers and find the file you want, or simply drag the file's icon onto an open browser window.

8 With the new versions of Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer, if you visit multiple Websites during one Internet session you can easily return to sites you visited earlier: Click on the Back button and continue to hold down your mouse button. Up pops a little window containing all the sites you visited during that session! Just select the site to which you want to return, and the browser takes you there.

17 To print quickly from the Finder, just highlight a document icon and select Print from the File menu. Your Mac will briefly open the application, print the document, and quit.

18 Your Control Strip seems to be stuck in one place. But you can move it by Option-dragging it.

19 To remove a module from the Control Strip, hold down Option and click and hold on the module you want to remove. Release Option and drag the module to the desktop for removal.

20 Next time you're copying something into a folder that's buried inside of another folder, simply hold the item you're copying over the folder you wish to open. Wait a few seconds and the folder will pop open for you.

21 Click and drag with your cursor to select multiple items.

22 Highlight non-contiguous items by holding down Shift.

23 Roll up multiple windows within the same application by holding down

FOLDER TRICKS

1 Drag open folders to the bottom of the screen and they'll appear as tabs.

2 In folders, type any letter to highlight files beginning with that letter.

3 Hit Tab to move through the files in any folder one by one.

4 Hit Shift-Tab to go backward.

5 In a list of twenty files, two of which are "Press Release" and "Product Release," quickly type "p-r-o" and you'll be taken to the second item.

6 Open a folder and close the one that contains it at the same time by holding down Option as you double-click the folder icon.

Option while clicking the roll-up button on the title bar.

24 Back up your Remote access, modem, and TCP/IP preferences. That way, if you have a system crash or have to reinstall system software, you can drag them back into the Preferences folder and not have to reset anything to get Internet access.

25 Want another way to empty the Trash? Highlight the icon of the file you want to get rid of and hit Command-Delete.

26 To select all of the items in a Finder window, hit Command-A, for "Select All." It works just like it does in just about every Mac application.

27 Remember — Anything you put in your Apple Menu Items folder in your System folder will appear in the Apple

7 Close all your open Finder windows by holding down Option while clicking the close box of one window.

8 To make a file jump to the top of the list, copy a hard return and paste it in front of the file name.

9 Create your own labels for files: In the Finder, just go to the Edit menu and select Preferences, then change the default titles.

10 Click the right-most box in a Finder window to collapse it.

11 Want to know what you worked on last? In any Finder window in List view, click on the button called "Date Modified." The most recent files will pop to the top.

12 For a permanent window showing your open applications, click and hold the Finder icon in the upper right corner of your screen (the applications Menu) and drag down onto your desktop.

menu in the upper-left-hand corner. Anything. That means favorite folders, apps, you name it. So make an alias of your favorite items (Select it, then hit Command-M on the keyboard), change the name to something snappy, and put it in your Apple menu. It's your menu, after all.

28 To restart a Mac when you can't do anything else, press Control-Command-and the Power key. Restart your iMac by pressing Shift-Command-Power key. That's less harsh than hitting the button on the front of the computer.

29 By holding down the Option key and dragging a file to a different spot on your hard disk, you make a copy,

rather than just moving it.

30 You can use your Mac as a CD-Player! Just pop any music CD into the CD drive, and your CD will play. Then you can adjust the volume and switch

between tracks using the AppleCD Audio Player, a small program that sits in your Apple menu.

31 Tidy up your Desktop by selecting Clean Up from the View menu. This will put each file in its own place.

32 When using Sherlock, (Command-F), you can drag files from the Found window to your desktop, to other folders, and to the Trash. You can open their enclosing folders in the lower half of the window, though you can't move those folders from there.

33 You can also open programs and files from the Found window.

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

1 If an application freezes (or if you just get tired of waiting for it), you can force-quit by hitting Command-Option-Escape. You should then restart to protect against subsequent crashes.

2 Hold down the Shift key at startup to disable all your extensions. This is sometimes useful to find out if it's the extensions that are causing crashes.

3 Is your printer misbehaving? Try turning it off, waiting a few seconds, and turning it back on again.

4 In your Extensions folder within your System folder, there's a folder of printer descriptions, and it will most likely contain some that you've never dreamed of using. Delete all the extraneous ones for a slimmer system.

5 Many games will switch your monitor's resolution to 640 x 480 if you're not already running at that resolution, but the image may be skewed or warped. Quit the game, then use your Monitors control panel to choose the 640 x 480 resolution manually. Use your monitor's controls to make the image appear correctly and restart the game. The screen should be corrected.

6 Rebuild your desktop if documents



have trouble finding the right application, or if icons appear generic (white). To do this, restart and then hold down the Option and Command keys.

7 If you know that you're not going to be sharing files between Macs for a period of time, turn off File Sharing from the File Sharing control panel. This will save memory and improve performance.

8 As a general rule, use as little virtual memory as possible, but do use at least 1MB. Make these settings from the Memory control panel.

9 Zap your PRAM if monitors or other peripheral devices start behaving oddly. (hold down Command-Option-P-R while restarting; wait for three chimes).

10 If you do zap your PRAM, several control panels will revert to their default settings. They include Appearance, AppleTalk, ColorSync Profile, Map, Memory, and Mouse. Reset them after each zap. Don't reset your date and time until after you check the Map control panel, because the former is dependent on the latter.

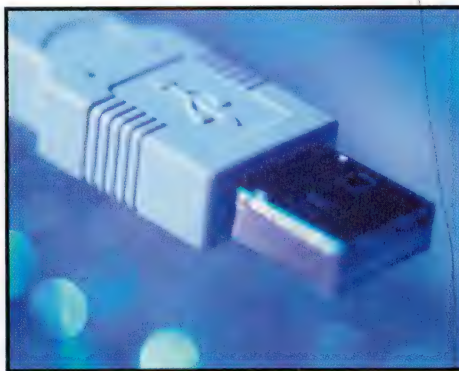
11 After zapping your PRAM, make sure you reset your Mac's Map and Date & Time control panels before you start sending email; if you don't, your messages will appear to have been sent in 1956, dropping them out of sight in most people's In boxes.

12 If your Internet browser crashes often, it may not have enough memory allocated to it. Increase it by single-clicking on the application's icon (while the application isn't running), hit Get Info (Command-I), and increase the preferred amount by 25% or more.

13 After installing more RAM, increase the allocated memory for each of your frequently used applications by clicking on its icon, choosing Get Info from the File menu, switching the menu to Memory, and increasing the

number under Preferred. Hint: OS X will do this for you automatically.

14 Also, head on over to the Memory control panel, and make note of all your settings. Then click on the "Use



Default" button, which will bounce up your Disk Cache to accommodate for your increased RAM. This will speed up the display of windows and menus, and will make your finder tasks run much more smoothly.

15 Ever get Weird Problems on the Web? The problem may be caused by your browser's plug-ins. Locate your browser's Plug-ins folder. Create a new folder and

name it "temp," and drag out all of the plug-ins from the plug-ins folder to the new folder. Then try some surfing. Did the problem go away? If it did, try adding back the plug-ins one at a time until you find out which one is causing the problem. Then either re-install the troublesome plug-in or go ahead and surf without it.

16 When contacting tech-support personnel, offer to email a system profile for your Mac. Use the Apple System Profiler supplied with newer system software, then choose Create Report from the File menu.

17 If you're experiencing any number of strange problems with your Mac, try deleting the Finder Preferences. Not the Finder, mind you, but the Finder Preferences, located in the Preferences Folder in the System Folder. But you won't be able to empty the trash until you Restart.

18 If your Mac stops recognizing USB peripherals, try unplugging them and plugging them back in again. Most of the time, this will solve the problem.

19 At the first sign of trouble with print-

MORE FUN WITH ALIASES

1 An alias is a pointer to a file or application, but it's not the "real thing." You can delete an alias without harming — in any way — the file, folder, or application that it's pointing to. How do you recognize an alias? Its name is in italics.

2 You can gain easy access to your hard drive by putting an alias of it in the Apple Menu Items folder. Single-click the hard drive icon, hit Command-M (Make Alias), then drag the alias to the Apple Menu Items folder in the System Folder. You can then scroll through any nested folder on your hard drive without opening them all up.

3 Yes, you can make an alias of your Trash. In fact, you can make more than one, and place them in strategic spots around your screen. Sure, your screen will be a bit cluttered, but that way you're almost sure to be able to find the Trash can when you so desperately need it.

4 Looking for the real McCoy? To quickly find the original to an alias, select the alias and hit Command-R.

5 Holding down the Command and Option keys, drag your Hard Drive icon to the Apple Menu Items folder (thus creating an alias there without the word "alias" appearing).

■ With ordinary printers, you see the trees.

■ With our printers, you see the bonsai trees.





YOU'VE GOT TO SEE IT IN

EPSON

COLOR.



The ladybugs are the clue. See all six? Of course you do. And once you have, you realize what you thought were giant trees are actually small bonsai. Thanks to a tiny detail, the whole picture changes. It's just one example of the extraordinary image quality you get from an Epson® printer. With 2880 dpi, there's no color or nuance so subtle it goes unnoticed. And just as you see here, it's those quiet little things that often speak the loudest. Only Epson color ink jet printers have: 2880 x 720 dpi • Micro Piezo™ technology, for a cleaner, smaller droplet – as small as 3 picoliters • Fast print speeds – up to 13 PPM black/10 PPM color (with the Epson SC 980) • Quick-drying inks • PC/Mac/USB compatibility. And remember, only Epson supplies guarantee Epson quality. For more information, call 1-800-GO-EPSON or visit www.epson.com.

Epson Stylus Color
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Sheer brilliance
starting at \$99.



ers, scanners, and other peripherals, try reverting to a simpler extension set, which makes it easier for you (or tech support) to solve the problem. Go into the Extensions control panel, change the Selected Set at the top to "Mac OS Base."

20 Sometimes you can't change the name of your hard disk — that's when File Sharing is on. Turn it off, and you'll then be able to change the name.

FANCY TIPS

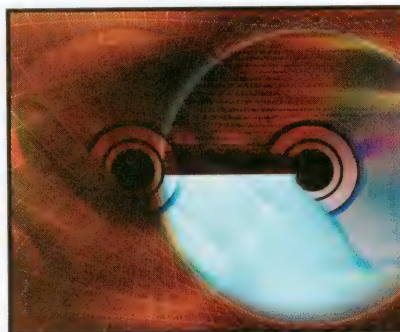
1 To bring up the Extensions Manager at startup, hold down the spacebar.

2 Microsoft's Office applications — Word, Excel, and PowerPoint — all offer unlimited undos. However, they also offer unlimited redos. By alternately hitting Command-Z and Command-Y, you can move back and forth between your revisions willy-nilly, regardless of whether you've saved or not.

3 To highlight a word in most applica-

tions, double-click it. To highlight a paragraph, triple-click it.

4 Macs can house more than one hard drive at a time; many have room inside their cases for a second one, or even a third. Some advantages to putting one inside the case rather than using an external drive are that you pay less for the drive (no enclosure), there are no power cords, and it's always available (you don't have to turn it on).



5 Buying a new, bigger monitor? Don't throw out the old one; buy a video card (you may need one for the larger monitor anyway) and run two monitors at once off your single Mac. You can use both monitors as one big desktop.

6 If an image won't display as a desktop picture, it's either too large or in the wrong format. Use either PICT- or JPEG-formatted photos, and try to keep them under 200K.

7 Put a sound file or a QuickTime movie in the Startup Items folder (within the System Folder) and it will run while your Mac is booting up. If you want applications to be ready to go when you boot up, drop aliases of them in there, too.

8 To avoid spam email (unwanted messages), set your email application to automatically trash any message that isn't specifically addressed to you.

9 Ever get a document filled with "dumb" (straight) quotes instead of the fancy, "smart" curved ones? (They're smart because they "know" to curve one way at the beginning of a word and the other way at the end.) Don't change them individually! Instead, do a search-and-replace. For the quotes before the quoted

material, search for a space followed by a quote, and for the quotes at the end, search for a quote followed by a space.

10 To quickly find the total playing time of an audio CD, highlight the CD and do a Get Info (Command-I). The total playing time will be in the Comments box.

11 Want to delete all of those >'s from your email? Bring the text into Word, go to the top of your document, click, and before you drag, hold down the Option key. This will enable you to select a vertical column of text, and take out all of those >'s in one fell swoop.

12 To create your own desktop pattern, first, go into the Appearance control panel, and copy an existing one. Then go to your favorite image-editing program, and paste it in. This will give you the exact dimensions of a desktop pattern tile. You can modify an existing pattern, or create your own, but keep the dimensions of the copied pattern.

13 For an automatic update of all of your necessary system software at the same time, head over to the Software Update control panel, and click the Update Now button (OS 9 only).

14 You can sometimes play just the soundtrack from a game by opening it in the CD player application.

15 Tired of the same alert sound every time you make a false move? Time to make your own. From the Sound control panel, click on Alerts, then click on Add. A virtual tape recorder pops up. Click the Record button, and make your sound. For best results, use a microphone.

16 Get an Ethernet Crossover Cable from your local computer store, and run it between two Macs via their Ethernet ports. Turn on File Sharing on one

WACKY TIPS

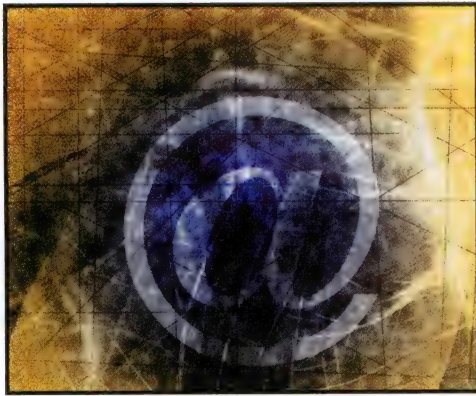
1 Mad, mad, MAD at a particular object in a QuarkXPress file? Don't just delete it, "Shift-Command-Option K" it! To get the full effect, be sure you're zoomed out enough to see some paste-board.

2 Hold down Option and click on the Apple menu. The "About This Computer" menu item will say "About the Finder..." Select for a surprise.



3 Launch Stickies (It's in the Apple Menu), type in Antler! and hit Return in a New Stickies Note for clues on the origin of Stickies.

computer, use the other computer to select it in the Chooser, and copy files between them. You'll see some amazing speeds — to the tune of about 1MB a second.



22 You can keep a lot of information in a Sticky, and if you select the option to “double-click title bar to collapse windows” (found in the Appearance

control panel), you can collapse a gigantic Sticky into a slick little bar with a title, and pop it open just by double-clicking it.

17 Perplexing, isn't it, trying to guess which extensions and control panels go with which application. But while in Extensions Manager, you can go up to the View menu and select Packages. That will show you which extensions and control panels go together, and which application they support.

18 Want to make your Mac resound with odd, subtle little sound effects whenever you move a file, open a folder, or pull down a menu? In the Appearance control panel, click on the Sound tab, and then check the box that says Platinum sounds. Then go about your business, but keep an ear out.

19 You can turn your PowerBook into a FireWire disk! Just start up your PowerBook while holding down the T key. When a FireWire symbol comes up, you can run a FireWire cable from the PowerBook to any FireWire-equipped Mac, and the PowerBook will appear on the other Mac's Desktop.

20 Need to copy and paste pieces of text from one document to another, in separate applications? Instead of copy, paste, copy, paste, highlight each piece of text and drag it to the desktop as a text clipping. Then you can drag them individually into the second document.

21 For frequently used text, such as names and addresses: Type it into a word processing document, drag it onto the desktop (turning it into a text clipping), and give it a file name. You can use it over and over again. Better yet, it's very small, and you don't need an application in order to read it.

23 In Microsoft Word, you can easily switch between upper case, lower case, and even title case by choosing “Change Case” from the Format menu.

24 The Location Manager control panel is not just for PowerBooks! You can also use it to set up multiple configurations on your desktop Mac.

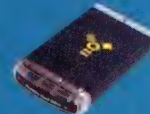
25 You can launch each of your favorite applications with the touch of a button. First, create aliases of your favorite apps (Select them, and hit Command-M). Drag the aliases into a folder, and switch the folder to Button view. Leave the folder open on your desktop for one-click access.

26 Want to fax someone what's on your screen? Want to check your printer without having any applications open? Just click once on the Desktop (so that you're in the Finder), and choose Print Desktop from the File menu.

27 If you want to save any of your emails and put them on a disk for later use, save them as SimpleText files. That way you can open them on any Mac. In an open email, choose Save As from the File menu, and check any options to “guess paragraphs” or “include headers.”

28 Tired of seeing your files in plain ol' Geneva? Your Mac can use any font you choose. Just go to the Appearance control panel, click Font, choose your fonts, and away you go! **MHJ**

Get away from the office without missing a beat.



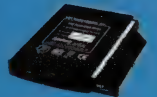
FireWire
Hard Drive



USB/FireWire
Combo Drive



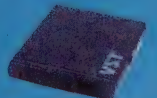
Tri-Media
Reader



PowerBook
peripherals



FireWire
RAIDArray



USB CD-RW
Drive

With VST's line of portable USB, FireWire® (IEEE 1394) and laptop peripherals, you can get away from the office without missing a beat.

From our high quality hard drives, innovative FireWire RAIDArray, or convenient removable media devices and power accessories, VST has the device you need to be mobile.

So, for all of your portable computing needs visit www.vsttech.com to learn more about these and other exciting products designed with your mobility, productivity and convenience in mind.



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www.vsttech.com

An abstract digital artwork featuring a globe, binary code, and a computer mouse. The globe is depicted with a blue and green color scheme, surrounded by a network of blue lines. Binary code (0s and 1s) is scattered throughout the image, particularly around the globe and the mouse. A computer mouse is visible in the center, with a red light. The overall composition is dynamic and futuristic, with various elements overlapping and interacting.

By Jeff Battersby

I Want My ISP!

A Roundup of Internet Service Providers

When it comes to Internet Service Providers (ISPs), there's an unbelievable number of options available to you. Literally hundreds of companies are vying for your dollars and trying to entice you with a variety of features. How do you know which one to choose?

Should you choose a local ISP or a company that has a national presence? How do you decide whether to choose America Online (AOL), which insulates you from the idiosyncrasies of the Net, or a standard ISP that gives you complete control over your Web experience? As with most of life's choices, there's no such thing as a simple answer. What you have is a multitude of choices, all of which are good but only some of which will suit your specific needs.

We took a look at four of the major players in the ISP game: AOL (www.aol.com) and EarthLink (www.earthlink.net), both of which cater to both Mac and Window's

users; and MacConnect (www.mac-connect.com) and MacRevolution (www.macrevolution.com), which make a point of catering specifically to Mac users. Each of these ISPs has a proven reputation. AOL has more than 23 million members, and EarthLink is Apple's preferred internet service provider. MacConnect and MacRevolution are the premiere Web-hosting sites for services like VersionTracker.com, AppleLinks.com and the Web home of Ben and Jerry's ice cream. What makes an ISP good for you is dependent on a number of issues. How much does the ISP cost? What do you get for the price? How difficult is it to sign-on? How reliable



is the service? When it comes to answering these questions, *MacHome* is here to help you; giving you the skinny on all four services and helping you make the best decision possible.

Setting Up

There's no question that AOL is the easiest ISP on the planet to set up. All you have to do is drop their CD-ROM into your Macintosh, double-click the installer, answer a couple of questions, and you are on your way. Fortunately, now the Mac OS — with its new Internet Assistant — makes it nearly, but not quite, as easy to connect to any ISP as it is to connect to AOL.

When setting up AOL, all you need to have is a phone line connected to your computer and a credit card in your hand, and you'll be up and running on the Net in a matter of minutes. With any other ISP, you're going to need to know some pretty geeky information, and how to add it to your Mac. What will you need to know? The phone number to access your ISP, your ISP's DNS (domain name server) addresses, your ISP's domain name, your user ID and password, and the name of the server where your email can be accessed. (Something like smtp.earthlink.net.) As I said before, this information is pretty geeky, but it's also readily available from your Internet Service Provider. Using your Mac's Internet Assistant — found in the "Internet" folder on your Mac's hard drive — makes it very easy to get all this information put in the right places. But when you see the collection of information you need to gather to set up an Internet account, it's rather obvious why AOL holds such appeal for users new to the Net.

Pricing

When it comes to pricing and ISPs there's no such thing as consistency. Here's a brief, but limited overview:

MacConnect — Basic package: 30 hours; three mailboxes; My MacConnect; \$16 per month. Full package: 200 hours; six mailboxes; 5MB

of Web space; My MacConnect; \$25 per month.

MacRevolution — Unlimited access; five email accounts; 50MB of Web space; \$17 per month.

EarthLink — Basic package: Unlimited Internet access; one email address; Personal Start Page; \$20 per month. Family package: Unlimited access; six email addresses; 6MB of Web space; personal start page for each email address; \$22 per month.

AOL — Unlimited access; seven email addresses; AOL's custom software; \$22 per month.

Be sure to visit each ISP's Web page for more details. All of the companies offer a wider variety of options and specialized packages for business users.

Features

Of the four ISPs that we looked at for this article, AOL is the only one that is an actual application. What does that mean to you? While the other three ISPs link straight to the Internet without any insulation whatsoever, AOL provides you with special software that acts as a buffer between you and the Internet. This "buffer" consists of a number of features including: proprietary chat communities; keywords (one-word commands that will take you to a specific areas within AOL); online meetings; thousands of resources, such as investing, software, and tech support; and email. Clicking different buttons on AOL's welcome page gain you access to all of these features. This makes it especially easy for you to take your first steps onto the Internet without having to know anything at all.

How does this differ from ISPs like EarthLink, MacConnect and MacRevolution? When you sign on with any of these companies it's up to you to organize your own Web experience. Need to see your email? You'll have to open up your email application in order to collect it. Want to search the Web to find the best airline tickets? You'll need to know how to get to the Expedia Website. And you'll have to do it all with very little handholding.

Both EarthLink and MacConnect provide you with personal Web pages that include links to your favorite Websites and search engines. MacRevolution doesn't currently provide this option, but according to its Website, it's apparently in the planning stages. Of the two that did provide personalized Web pages, EarthLink's was by far the best. While MacConnect doesn't allow you to customize its start page, EarthLink gives you full reign over what you see on your page, including links to Amazon.com, eBay, CNN, CBS, and ESPN. EarthLink also provides features

DSL is Coming!

If you've had your ear to the ground lately you've probably started to hear about DSL. DSL, which is an acronym for Digital Subscriber Line, is a technology that allows you have high-speed Internet connections running over your normal telephone lines. While you can expect to spend a few extra bucks to use DSL — anywhere from \$50 to \$400 per month for a connection — DSL gives you lightning-fast speeds of up to 1,500 Kbps. (Which is a far cry from the paltry 53 Kbps max that's possible with your modem.) DSL connections are "Always on," which means you never have to dial your ISP and you'll never face another busy signal.

Finally, because DSL gets transmitted at a higher frequency than voice does, you can still use your phone even when you're connected to the Internet. But DSL is not yet available in all areas, so check with your ISP to see if they provide the service.





EarthLink provides subscribers with an easy-to-understand Start Page that you can personalize by selecting different features to appear each time you get online.



that you'll only find on sites like Yahoo and Excite, including stock portfolios and online bill paying. EarthLink also gives you the added advantage of being able to collect your EarthLink email from your start page.

When it comes to Internet chats there's something important you should know. Even if all of your friends are currently using AOL and you're not, it's still possible for you to use AOL's AIM chat program to chat with your friends. AOL offers this program for free to anyone on the Internet. All you need to do is go to www.aol.com and click the link that says "AOL Instant Messenger." From there you'll be able to sign up to use AIM and download the program that allows you to chat across the Internet.

Mac Support

When it comes to choosing an ISP, this is where the rubber really meets the road. If your ISP tech-support experience has been anything like mine, your conversations may have gone something like this. Tech:

"Okay, now click on the Start Menu and go up "Settings" and then click ..." Me: "Excuse me." Tech: "... Control Panel ... What?" Me: "I'm using a Mac. I don't have a Start menu." Tech: "A Mac?" Me: "Yes." Tech: "We don't have anyone that knows how to set up a Mac." Me: "You don't?" Tech: "Well, I

think there might be a guy, but he doesn't get here 'til after 10 o'clock." Bottom line? If your ISP doesn't know anything about Macs and you run into trouble, you may not get all the support that you need.

MacConnect, MacRevolution and EarthLink all provide excellent Macintosh support. When I called MacConnect on a Saturday morning, my call and my question were answered in a matter of seconds. There was no hold time and the phone was picked up within the first couple of rings. Like MacConnect, MacRevolution was quick to answer its toll-free support line and it quickly provided me with answers.

If your problem isn't keeping you from getting online, EarthLink provides a very useful tech-support feature called Macintosh Live Chat. Using this option you can ask a tech-support representative your questions using a Web-based chat window. When I tried this feature I was able to connect to a Mac specialist who answered my technical questions in a matter of seconds. Like phone support, I did have to wait a couple of minutes before I was able to actually send my message. But once I made contact, the process was amazingly easy. Also, and again, if you're currently able to make a Web connection, EarthLink has several online tutorials that will guide you through everything from setting up Open Transport to configuring and using your Web browser.

When it comes to tech support, AOL

can be a rather large pain for both Mac and Windows users alike. First, for some reason AOL chooses to update its Mac software several months after it updates its Windows software; leaving Mac users without features that their Windows friends already enjoy. Second, from a pure support perspective both Windows and Mac users face exactly the same problem: with 23 million users you can expect to spend some time on hold if you want to get some help. In this regard all three of the other ISPs are far superior to AOL.

Always Online ...

If you remember a few years back, AOL had a nasty reputation for being the king of the busy signal. (Can you say "Class Action Suit?") It didn't matter when you called or how many times you tried, if you attempted to get on to America Online chances were you'd be met with a busy signal. Fortunately, things have changed at AOL, although depending on where you live you can still expect to get a busy signal from time to time. All three of the other ISPs boast excellent uptime and modems that are almost never busy. Combined, MacConnect and MacRevolution have had less than four hours downtime since January 1, and a portion of that downtime was due to system upgrades. EarthLink has had no downtime whatsoever since the first of the year. Also, all three have significantly more modems available to their users than they have current subscribers, meaning that if you choose any of them your chances of getting a busy signal are almost nil.

Is That Your Final Answer?

Choosing an Internet Service Provider is ultimately a personal decision. While we've covered a number of features for these four ISPs, your best bet is to spend some time visiting the Websites for each of these ISPs. Also, in the case of EarthLink, MacConnect, and MacRevolution, take some time to call their customer service lines to get a better idea of the type of service that you'll be getting. If you do, you're certain to make your Web-surfing experience its absolute best. **MJH**

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Troubleshooting from the Hip

How to Identify and Fix Common Problems

By Chris McVeigh

Allow me to be blunt: Your Macintosh is going to crash. Applications will unexpectedly quit. The screen will freeze. And from time to time, you will lose unsaved data. These are the hard, cold facts of computing. It is not my intent to be Chicken Little. Rather, I hope to show you that although problems do crop up from time to time, the sky very rarely falls. Learning how to identify and fix repetitive problems with your Macintosh can help you avoid stress and potentially expensive trips to a service center.

Getting Started

One of the most seemingly difficult skills to acquire is the ability to determine the exact nature of a Macintosh problem. How can you tell whether the issue is hardware or software related? And if it is a software issue, how can you tell if it's a problem with Mac OS or an application? How can you tell if it's a virus, or perhaps even a beguiling hard drive corruption?

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers. Troubleshooting is a process of elimination. The first consideration is hardware; but once that's been ruled out, you need to consider various software issues, including corruption of your hard drive directory, problems related to the Mac's operating system, and the possibility of a virus. It's important to remain calm at all times and think clearly.

Hardware-Related Problems

Hardware problems are frequently obvious and thus the easiest to diagnose. More often than not, they crop up when one of your computer's components simply stops functioning. Among such problems:

- Your Macintosh fails to turn on when the Power button is pressed.
- The display fails to turn on, but you can hear both the fan and hard drive functioning.
- The display exhibits a predominantly red, green, or blue tint.
- Your Macintosh fails to recognize any CD-ROM you insert.
- Your keyboard or mouse no longer functions (even after unplugging and replugging the keyboard, if it's a USB Mac) or several keys on your keyboard no longer work.

Unfortunately, these problems usually require replacement parts, and as such, you must tote your Macintosh to an authorized service provider for repair. Please see Technical Support Resources below for more information.

Software-Related Problems

Most of the problems you are likely to encounter with your Macintosh will be software-based. You may be experiencing software problems if you encounter any of the following:

- Your Macintosh crashes while it's starting up.
- Your Macintosh presents you with a question-marked folder at startup.
- Your Macintosh has a tendency to freeze when using certain programs.
- You consistently get the message, "The application unexpectedly quit ..." when using a certain application.
- General and noticeable odd behavior: funny sounds at odd times, unusual slowdowns, consistent crashing.

Crashing During Startup

One of the most common reasons for crashes during startup is that you've added a control panel or extension that conflicts with either the Mac OS or

another control panel or extension you have installed.

To tackle this problem, reboot your Macintosh with the shift key held down to prevent control panels and extensions from loading. If you do not experience a crash, you can be reasonably assured that an extension or control panel you've added to your system is the culprit. Remove all non-Apple control panels and extensions from your Control Panels and Extensions folders (within your System Folder) and restart your Macintosh. If your Macintosh startup was successful, place approximately five extensions/control panels in their original locations in your System Folder and restart your computer. Continue to do this until your Macintosh crashes again at startup. When this occurs, you will know that one of the five most recent extensions/control panels you added to your System Folder is causing your problem. Repeat the aforementioned procedure, this time adding one of the suspect extensions/control panels at a time. Once you have isolated the troublemaker, set it aside. You might want to visit that product's Website and browse through its technical-support pages to see if the publisher is aware of any such conflicts, and if a software update is available.

Failure to Start Up

The appearance of the flashing question mark at startup indicates a hard drive problem. There are three possibilities: the Mac OS software may be corrupt; the hard drive may have experienced corruption to its catalog files (the files that note where each and every file is stored); or the hard drive itself may have failed.

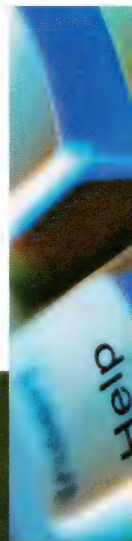
If you are experiencing this problem, place the Macintosh Software Install CD in the disc drive and reboot your computer, holding down the C key. Once the Mac OS has loaded, click on the Macintosh Install CD, locate the Utilities folder, and open it. You should see several applications. Launch the application called Disk First Aid and note the volumes that appear in the upper portion of the window. If your hard drive is not listed, it may have experienced a mechanical failure. You'll want to get your Macintosh into an Apple Authorized Service Provider for a professional diagnosis.

Assuming your hard drive is listed, click once on its icon to highlight it and then click the Repair button. Disk First Aid will examine your hard drive for catalog corruption (among other things) and repair most problems it encounters.

Occasionally, it will encounter a problem it cannot fix. You then have two choices: You can purchase a more thorough hard drive repair utility, such as Micromat's Tech Tool Pro (\$99), or you can take your Macintosh in for professional servicing.

Installing the Mac OS

On your Macintosh's Software Install CD, find and launch the application titled Mac OS Install. Click Continue. In the bottom left corner of the next window, you'll see an Options button. Clicking that button takes you to a small dialog box that gives the option to "Perform a Clean Installation." As a rule, it's always better to perform a clean install of the Mac OS than a standard installation. Instead of simply overwriting software in your existing System Folder, a clean install creates a fresh new System Folder. This ensures that any potentially corrupt files are left behind in the Previous System Folder. Unfortunately, you also leave behind any extra control panels, extensions, and fonts you might have added. You'll need to dig through the Previous System Folder and drag the items to the new System Folder, or simply reinstall the items from their own installers.



Duplicate System Folder

Wouldn't it save a lot of time if you could just replace your System Folder instead of reinstalling the Mac OS from scratch? The next time you install a fresh set of system software and secondary system components, click on your system folder and press command-D to make a duplicate of it. Store the duplicate system folder in your Utilities folder or somewhere else you can access it when needed. You can even store it on a Zip disk, if you prefer. The next time you run into problems with your Macintosh, simply haul out the duplicate system folder and place it at the root level of your hard drive where your current system folder sits. Open the current system folder, locate the System file, and drag it to the trash. Now, open the duplicate system folder and watch for its folders to adopt the standard system folder icons. (For example, the Apple menu items folder will adopt an Apple icon.) This indicates that the duplicate system folder has become the current system folder. Drag the old system folder to the trash and remove the word "copy" from the end of the duplicate system folder. It's now safe to restart your Macintosh. When you reboot, you'll be using a fresh set of system software that has been untainted by crashes or other potentially scarring influences. To be on the safe side, make another copy of your system folder and store it in a convenient location so it will be on hand just in case anything else goes wrong.

Disk First Aid might not find any problems with your hard drive. The likely culprit is then a corrupt set of system software. To cure what ails your Macintosh, you'll need to perform a clean install of the Mac OS. (Please see the sidebar "Installing the Mac OS" for more information.)

Frequent Crashing

It's important to note what type of crashes you are experiencing. A random crash occurs at any given time under a

variety of circumstances; while a predictable crash occurs when a specific application is launched or a specific action is initiated. Random crashes tend to be caused by corruption of the Mac OS or corruption of the hard drive catalog files, while predictable crashes often occur due to an incompatibility between an extension, control panel, and/or application.

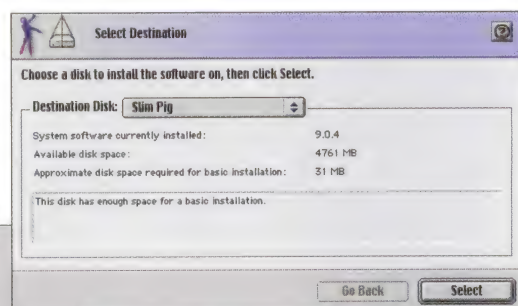
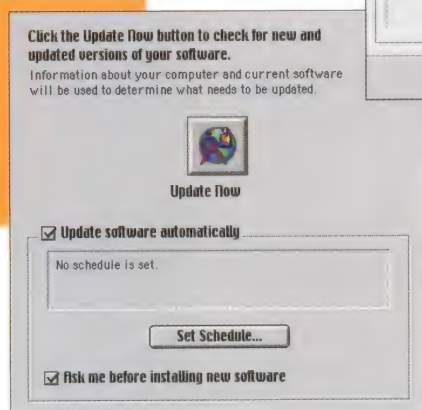
Random Crashes: Perform the same steps you would do for fixing a failure to start up — starting with Disk First Aid, and performing a clean install if no problems were found.

Predictable Crashes: Make a note of when and where the crash occurs. For example, you might experi-

software. You should remove all non-Apple items from your Extensions and Control Panels folder. Add these system components back to your system one at a time, restart your Macintosh, and attempt to initiate the crash. Once you finally succeed in locking up your computer, you'll have found the trouble-maker. You might want to visit that product's Website and browse through its technical support pages to see if the publisher is aware of any such conflicts, and if a software update is available.

Viruses

Over time, your Macintosh may be exposed to a computer virus. This can happen if you have downloaded software from the Internet or copied it from a CD-ROM that a friend has made. (Please note that most major software libraries on the Internet check all software for viruses before making it available for download; additionally, publishers' installer disks are not likely to contain viruses.) If you run an



Mac OS 9's Automatic Update feature is a very easy way to download exactly what you need to keep your Mac in tip-top shape.

infected application on your Macintosh, you will likely spread the virus within your computer.

The simplest way to address a virus problem is to routinely use a virus checker as preventative maintenance. Commercial programs are a good choice, such as Norton Anti-virus for Macintosh (NAM) or Dr. Solomon's Virex, but freeware programs such as Agax, BugScan, and WormScanner will certainly do the job. (Visit www.download.com for the latest versions of these

applications.) You should scan for viruses at least once a month, especially if you suspect you may have been exposed to one.



Technical Support Resources

Occasionally, you will find it impossible to diagnose and repair your problem without a little help. That's okay — even the most learned service provider must seek out help from time to time. There are several support resources available to you online and via telephone.

Apple's Online Support

The first place you should turn for assistance is Apple's Support Site at www.apple.com/support. A picture for each model of Macintosh sits at the left, and as you roll the mouse over each computer a submenu pops up to the right. Click the model name of your computer, which should be located at the top of the submenu. A new page will load. In the top right, you'll see the words "Get Help." Click on the pop-up menu below these words and browse the listing of options. Select the



Apple's Support Sites provide a wealth of information (left). If things get dire, you can hire the services of experts such as MacTank.

entry that seems to fit your problem and follow the instructions in the article that follows.

Apple's Technical Information Library

This resource contains hundreds of articles that suggest repair strategies with various kinds of software and hardware for known problems. In some cases, you will find that the beguiling problem you are experiencing can be cured with a simple software update. In other cases, the article will advise you of a simple work-around. Go to <http://til.info.apple.com>, enter keywords that identify your problem, and press Return. The server will return a listing of articles containing your keywords. You may have to sift through several articles before you find one that pertains to your exact problem. If the server has returned too many articles, it may be best to return to the search criteria page and input additional keywords to help narrow the search.

Update the Mac OS

The Mac OS isn't perfect. Like most operating systems, it's a work in progress. Apple releases software updates periodically to fix bugs and introduce new features. It's important that you download and install these updates, especially if you're experiencing a repetitive, reproducible problem. Software updates are available via Mac OS 9's Software Update control panel or at Apple's software update Website at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf>.

AppleCare Service

All Macs include an AppleCare warranty that provides repairs free of charge for one year. Should your Macintosh need servicing within that one-year period, you must call 800-500-7078.

PowerBook, iBook, and Apple Display owners who require repairs beyond the duration of the warranty should call Apple at the same number. The charge for these services will be estimated over the phone.

Power Macintosh and Macintosh owners who require servicing beyond the duration of the warranty should instead look to local Apple Authorized Service Providers. Authorized establishments make repairs using genuine Apple parts, so you needn't worry about paying for secondhand parts from a PC clone.

All new Apple computers also include 90 days of toll-free technical support at 888-275-8258. After 90 days, Apple charges a rather hefty \$49 per incident call, so be very sure that you've exhausted all other resources before you place a call.

MacTank

There is an alternative to the AppleCare SupportLine. MacTank (www.mactank.com) offers telephone technical support for as low as \$25 per incident. A scheduled call, where the MacTank folks will call you at a time most convenient for you, runs \$30. More-advanced issues are tackled with the \$45 Remote Assist Call, where needy users can download Timbuktu Pro (www.netopia.com) and have an interactive session with a remote operator. This service goes leaps and bounds beyond Apple's SupportLine, and yet costs \$5 less per call. Call 877-MAC-TANK for more information.

Don't Panic!

No matter what problem you are experiencing, it's important to remain calm and think logically. Learning how to troubleshoot your own technical problems is an important step. The more you know about your Macintosh, the better able you are to take care of it yourself. **MNJ**

ErgonoMacs

Finding the Right Furniture for Your Mac Environment

You may remember when you were a child and your mother implored you to “Sit up straight!” at the dinner table. Children can be notorious slouchers, and unfortunately, these bad practices can carry into adulthood. Bad seating posture is particularly hard on your back, especially if you are sitting at a desk all day.

Although maintaining good posture requires constant vigilance, it makes a world of difference to the long-term health and well-being of your back.

Today's marketplace is chock-full of furniture carefully designed to precisely fit your body. The term commonly used to describe this design concept is ergonomics, or the science of making the work environment more suitable for the worker. Ergonomic furniture is comfortable and well designed. Although more expensive than ordinary furniture, it is an insurance policy against serious back, neck, and wrist injury. Ultimately, you will save yourself a lot of pain and expense by outfitting your office with ergonomics in mind.

By Ross Tibbits

The basics behind good ergonomics are straightforward. You should look for furniture that adjusts to fit your particular body size and weight. A proper fit includes more than your desk chair. Desks and workstations are available to compliment your seating and are also adjustable. Ergonomic furniture will certainly make you more comfortable while gazing at your Mac. But, don't stop there. Be sure that your lighting is sufficient and that all the time and money you spend on fitting your body to your furniture is not sold short because your eyes are strained.

Seating Adjustments

Today, consumers have an ever-widening selection of seating choices. As with most consumer products, the more options you want, the more expensive the product. And, because ergonomic chairs can cost thousands of dollars, it's best to start with the basics. But of all of your investments, a good chair might be your most important one.

Height Adjustment

One of the most important fittings you can make to a chair is its seat height. Typically, you do this by means of a pneumatic or pressurized cylinder that helps you to raise or lower the seat. The correct height allows your feet to lie flat on the floor and your thighs to rest comfortably on the seat cushion. Too much pressure on the backs of your thighs means you'll need to lower the seat to allow your feet to take some of the load off. Lowering your seat too far will take all the pressure off your thighs, but increase pressure on your seat and lower back.



Equa 2

Shapely Seats

Cushions are sold at sporting events for good reason. Sitting on bleachers focuses all the weight of your body onto only a couple of points on your seat — these are aptly called pressure points. Too much pressure on too few points leaves you constantly searching for a comfortable position. By increasing contact areas in a chair's seat, more pressure points are created, and thus, pressure is spread out, leaving you more comfortable. Therefore, when

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Upgrading & Troubleshooting Your Mac By Gene Steinberg

What to do when your Mac is behaving badly? Want to upgrade without crashing? Don't panic. This solution-packed guide delivers fast-fix prescriptions to cure just about any Mac malady. Well-known Mac author Gene Steinberg has compiled a lifetime of expertise into short, carefully organized chapters and the book features real-life case studies from support professionals and dozens of illustrations. Plus, the companion CD-ROM contains demo versions of cutting-edge diagnostic software.

608 pages, Softcover, with CD-ROM,
Publisher's Edition: \$29.99
Published by Osborne, Media Group

The Information Specialist's Guide to Searching & Researching on the Internet & the World Wide Web

By Ernest Ackermann & Karen Hartman

Your hardware is Internet-ready. Your software is browser-friendly. Now if you just had a way to cut through all that cyber-clutter and find Internet info fast. This book is the answer. With step-by-step directions—and page after page of illustrations, screen shots, and tips—you'll learn how to fine-tune your requests and zero in on the information you need, dramatically reducing your Web search time. All the major databases, search engines, and important Web sites are covered in this terrific guidebook.

500 pages, Softcover,
Publisher's Edition: \$29.95
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Macworld Mac OS 9 Bible

By Lon Poole & Todd Stauffer

The amazing OS 9 is here, and this is the book you need to make it run right! The *Macworld Mac OS 9 Bible* is packed with essential, hands-on information to get both beginners and more experienced users on board with OS 9. Filled with step-by-step instructions, practical examples and insights, this definitive reference is the key to understanding OS 9's remarkable features and using them to maximize your Mac. The authors have also included helpful coverage of previous Mac operating systems, including 8.6, 7.5, and 7.0.

1,000 pages, Softcover,
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N933 04 IS077

selecting an ergonomic chair, look for a contoured seat cushion. Not all are the same. Some offer remarkable, form-fitting contours, while others are less contoured and appear more traditional. It's important to sample a variety of styles to find the one that suits you the best.

Cushion Caution

Be sure that the seat cushion is a "water-fall" seat. This type of cushion slopes downward at the front so extra pressure is not exerted on the back of your knees or your lower back.

Backup Support

Lumbar support, as you may know, can make sitting for long periods of time remarkably comfortable. The backrests in ergonomic chairs offer varying degrees of lumbar support so the area between your lower ribs and your hips remains comfortable. This has the effect of keeping your spinal cord correctly shaped — straightening your upper torso. Some manufacturers even offer adjustable lumbar support.

Please Be Seated

Herman Miller

You can order the Equa 2 chair in three different sizes to ensure a good fit. The standard model comes with pneumatic height adjustment and a tilt-tension

or less lumbar support. Furthermore, this bladder can be moved vertically to precisely fit your back.

The armrests on the Equa 2 are some of the most adjustable on the market today. They can be raised and lowered, adjusted for width so that your forearms and elbows lie directly on top of them, and rotated in or out so they mimic the angle of your forearms.

The Equa 2 has won design awards and is known for its remarkable comfort in virtually any seating position. We chose the Equa 2 for its design, comfort, and cost. At \$450-\$900 it is a relatively inexpensive chair that offers some of the best ergonomics available. Herman Miller has a complete line of chairs and office furniture that you can look at while browsing through its Website.

BodyBilt

These chairs are to seating as Porsche is to the automotive world. BodyBilt has pushed the envelope of design and created a line of chairs that are innovative, thoughtful, and comfortable. Their J75x model line offers a selection of four different seat-cushion styles, while incorporating incredible adjustability across the product line.

Like other ergonomic chairs, these are designed to alleviate you of any unnecessary discomfort when sitting in front of your computer all day.

BodyBilt's designs are developed with pressure points in mind. Remember, when seated, pressure points are those areas where the majority of your body weight is focused. When form-fitting contours are placed directly into the molded cushion, greater contact with your body results. Ideally, your weight is spread out among a larger number of pressure points, which makes sitting much more comfortable.

BodyBilt's cushions are made as though they were form-fitted to the human body. The J752 sports radical-looking curves that wrap around your seat and legs as though you were strapped into a fighter jet. This may take

a little getting used to, but they are very comfortable chairs.

BodyBilt has incorporated a bladder into the lumbar support of the backrest. This can be inflated or deflated with a small pump that looks remarkably like the kind used to inflate the device your doctor uses to check your blood pressure. Vertical adjustment of the lumbar support is accomplished by lifting the backrest up a ratcheted spine.

Armrests can be raised, lowered, rotated in or out, widened, and even moved forward and backward with an optional attachment. Your arms are unlikely to be given this much attention anywhere else.

Below the base of the seat are three levers for pneumatic height, seat tilt, and backrest-angle adjustments. Fitting yourself to one of these chairs is half the fun of owning one. Think of it as creating a custom chair. Although these chairs are more expensive than most, they are well built and will have you sitting comfortably for years to come.

Among the many accessories that are available through BodyBilt is the iBook extended arm. This is a clever device that allows you to comfortably sit back in your BodyBilt chair and cruise the Internet, take notes, or write a novel on your iBook.

The Desktop

As you have seen with BodyBilt's iBook accessory, the days of the traditional desk are gone. Today's computer-centric desks are ergonomically designed and utilitarian in nature. They can have innovative desktop shapes, storage areas, and movable work surfaces.

What you need to keep in mind when buying one of these high-tech desks is that they should work in unison with your seating arrangement to make your work environment a comfortable one. A few years ago, innovative desks had slide-out keyboard trays that allowed you to type more comfortably. These would slide out from below your desktop where your center drawer was traditionally found. Today, this design concept has been expanded and desks often have two distinct levels. The raised level

did you know?

Indirect lighting reduces glare significantly.

It minimizes eyestrain and the neck and back pain associated with it, resulting in an optimal, more "ergonomically correct" workplace.

knob below the seat. Fully adjustable models are also available for those of you with specific needs.

If you purchase the fully adjustable model you are certain to find a perfect fit. The lumbar support is adjustable for both lumbar depth and height. By inflating and deflating an internal bladder in the seat, you can adjust for more

holds your monitor, peripherals, and other items less-frequently used. The lower level, which is adjusted to the height of your hands, holds your keyboard, telephone, or other frequently used items. This results in less stress-related movements and a more comfortable work environment.

Biomorph

What is striking about the Biomorph line of desks is its innovative design. You probably haven't seen anything like them before. Although their shapes look radical, they are designed with the belief that form follows function.

The Exo Desk has two shelf-like surfaces. The uppermost surface can hold up to a 20-inch monitor and a minitower with a limited number of peripherals. It measures 45 inches at its widest point and 22 inches at its deepest point. This surface's corners are trimmed at 45 degrees so the Exo can fit neatly into a tight corner. In fact, it has a 48-square-inch footprint, which makes it great for tight spaces.

The keyboard surface, which normally sits lower than the monitor surface, is 42 inches wide and 15 inches deep. The leading edge of this surface is slightly curved and organically shaped — increasing user comfort level. This shelf can be raised or lowered, depending on your preference.

An innovative feature of the keyboard shelf allows you to adjust its angle. This is particularly important if you want to use this desk while standing up (which will be explained in a moment). The leading edge of the shelf will tilt down as much as 10 degrees to better accommodate the angle of your hands.

If you need a workstation at which multiple individuals can perform quick searches, this is an excellent choice. Simply raise the shelves to the appropri-

ate height (up to 18 inches above their lowest setting) and remove the chair. Now, employees can walk up and comfortably perform their task. This will save valuable office space and increase accessibility.

If you are interested in style, you can order the Exo Desk with an attractive,

high-tech-looking

Maple

working

surface

with a matte

black steel superstructure. This will add about

\$100 to the base price of \$695. Otherwise, the

desk comes in a

modern charcoal

gray finish. The

Exo's clean lines

combined with its

attention to detail will make

using this desk a great experience.

If you need a larger working area, you can choose from a variety of models to meet your particular needs.

Lighting Environment

Imagine that you are now sitting in a chair perfectly tailored to your body. In front of you sits a desk that is adjusted so your keyboard is perfectly placed in front of your hands. You turn on your Mac and it smiles back at you.

Unfortunately, you are squinting because the window next to your desk is letting in too much light. Over the period of a day, this natural light, which often translates into glare, can strain your eyes. By decreasing this glare and making a few small changes, you will have the perfect work environment.

Reducing glare is easy. Drawing the blinds on your window so that some light comes in — but not so much that excessive glare develops around you — is important. If you have fluorescent lights above your desk, try turning them off. Typically, they discharge three times as

much light as you need. Also, they flicker, which can add to eyestrain.

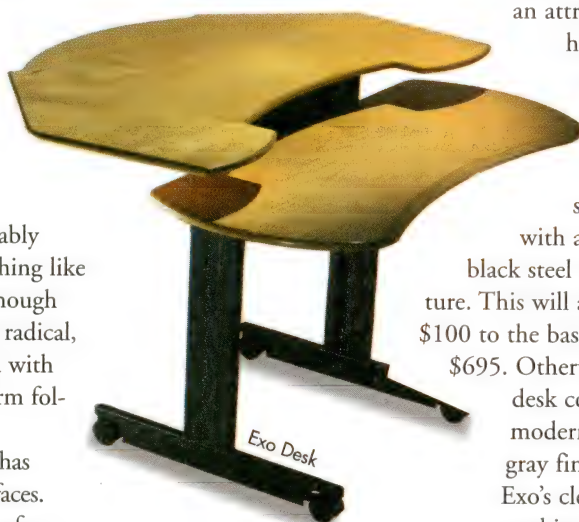
Eclipse

But don't leave yourself in the dark. A small fluorescent lamp such as the Eclipse can provide you with just the right amount of the glare-free light you need. Lamps like the Eclipse shine indirect light from a small fluorescent bulb onto your desktop and workspace. The idea is to avoid light shining directly onto your monitor, but rather onto your keyboard. The result is a glare-free desktop that will keep you working for hours without discomfort.

The Next Step

The next step is up to you. Maybe that old desk chair you've used all these years is ready for replacement. Imagine what it would be like to have the perfect amount of lumbar support and lots of pressure points to relieve your body of strain.

If you find that your hands and wrists are sore after your workday is through, an adjustable desk would make a world of difference. It's all a matter of choice, and choosing the right desk, chair, and lighting combination can be fun and exciting. So, don't wait until you are already visiting the chiropractor before you go shopping for new office furniture. **MHJ**



Furniture Resources

Herman Miller

800-646-4400

www.hmhome.com

Biomorph

888-302-3375

www.biodesk.com

BodyBilt

800-364-5299

www.bodybilt.com

Eclipse Computer Lamp

877-663-8324

www.onetech.net

Manage Your Media

Portfolio 5.0 Vs. Cumulus 5.0

In today's high-tech environment of the World Wide Web, the Internet, and E-commerce, we've become reliant on graphic images and other electronic media to convey ideas, concepts, and themes. Now everyone with a Website must somehow manage a media collection on their computer.

Because media files, be they QuickTime MPEG, JPEG, GIF, EPS, PSD, BMP, or TIFF, are often given names that are unrelated to their content, such as "vk_7509.jpg," and managing these titles can be a daunting task.

What makes these programs so remarkably powerful is that they handle so many media types. You can store virtually any kind of media, be it a text document in a word processing format, an image in JPEG, TIFF, or other image format, and even movies in MPEG format. So, no matter what type of business you operate, there may be some very good reasons to organize your multimedia data with the help of one of these programs.

By Ross Tibbits

Software developers responded by developing programs specifically designed to take the guesswork out of managing, organizing, and ultimately locating specific files among a sea of numbers and suffixes. Two of the most prominent developers are Extensis, manufacturer of Portfolio 5.0, and Canto, developer of version 5.0 of Cumulus.

The similarity between Portfolio 5.0 and Canto 5.0 leads you to believe that there is really only one way to manage media assets on your computer — visually. Each of these programs relies heavily on the use of thumbnails — small representations of an actual image or file — to help you manage your assets. If you have ever tried to discern the difference between numerous image files within a folder by their icons alone, you know how important this is.

Independent of where particular files are stored, be they in separate hard drives, on CD-ROMs, or on a server, both Portfolio and Cumulus let you create numerous catalogs of your media assets. Each catalog contains thumbnails and information particular to that thumbnail, such as the file's location, date of creation, size, or customized fields.

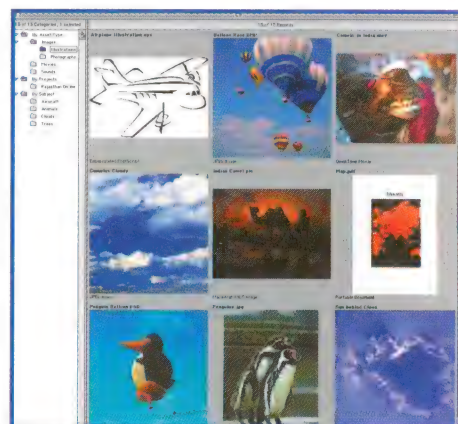
Getting Started

When starting out with either Portfolio or Cumulus a program window appears, within which you can import or drag-and-drop images. Now, you set up the ways in which yourself and others can search for your images and the information that you'd like to attach to them — such as the date they were created, keywords associated with them, and so on. There are different ways to view your catalogs — either by thumbnails, as a list without thumbnails, or as individual images with associated information.

Cumulus' main catalog page lets you to view your thumbnails in three different sizes, or in a separate window. Portfolio, on the other hand, doesn't provide different thumbnail sizes, but offers you viewing options when you enlarge the image with a double-click. Another subtle difference is that you can rotate thumbnails in the main Portfolio window to correct any orientation issues.

In Query

The most important function within each of these pro-



Cumulus

grams is searching. If you have thousands of images in your catalog it is vitally important to be able to find them. This is why both these programs have impressive search engines.

The search format is similar in both Cumulus and Portfolio. The main search window in Portfolio has three form windows to fill out. The first lets you select the search criteria you want, be it by Keyword, Thumbnail Size, Color Mode, Category, or Width, among 15 total criteria. Next, you will focus your search, in the second window, with a selection of terms such as Greater Than, Less Than, Matches, and so on. Lastly, you'll want to add a Search Word such as "people," "CMYK," or whatever you are looking for. When these windows are completed you can then decide to Find in a particular catalog, or Find All by searching your entire catalog collection. Once you have obtained your search results, you can save your query for obtaining the same information frequently and quickly.

Imagine you have filled out the three windows for your search: criteria, terms, and specific Search Word. By selecting the And/Or feature, you are able to broaden (And) or narrow (Or) your search with a second tier of search windows, bringing the total number to six. You can do this up to five times, giving you tremendous flexibility.

The Cumulus search window is striking in that you are able to broaden or narrow your search as much as you like. Whereas with Portfolio you are limited to four And/Or fields, Cumulus places no limitation on your search. At some point of course, this becomes redundant and unnecessary.

Aside from this difference, the two search engines are very much alike and behave equally as well, but with the use of slightly different terms within the search engine windows themselves.

The Web

Because businesses are so Web-oriented today, both Cumulus and Portfolio allow you to send your catalog, or a collection of images, over the Internet as

Web pages. This is done differently with each program.

Portfolio publishes your images on the Web as static Web pages in HTML code that reside on a specific server. Thus, you can direct your co-workers or clients to a Web address where your images can be viewed. You can export one page or numerous pages as HTML files in this way.

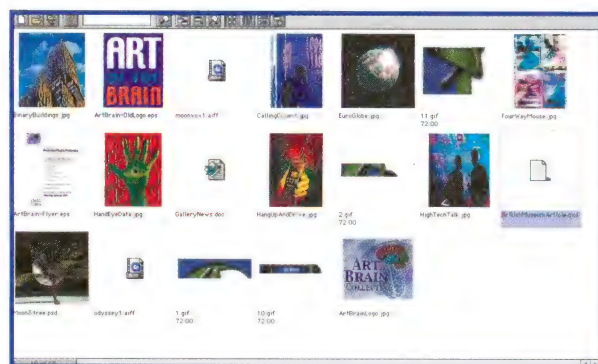
Cumulus, on the other hand, is not quite as powerful in this sense. You are able to create HTML files out of your particular image collections, but you cannot send the file(s) to a server per se. Instead, you send an HTML file to an individual who must then open it up using their browser program. This is not difficult or time consuming, but it is aimed at the smaller business person with fewer potential recipients.

If you want to add audio clips to these files when they are in HTML format, use the Cumulus Audio Files feature. When activated, your voice will be recorded using QuickTime, and when you send the file it will then get played using QuickTime as your friend, associate, or client views the page.

QuickTime comes in handy with both these programs when you want to use both programs' Slide Show feature. The Slide Show allows you to present any group of slides, in any order, in a slide show format. These slides can be blended together with special transition effects and saved as QuickTime movies. This is excellent for making presentations worldwide.

Vive la Difference!

If you operate a business with a technical administrator, and you have a lot of people interacting with your collection of images, Portfolio 5.0 is well suited to your needs. Your administrator can carefully manage and control access to your image collection and maintain it so that only certain individuals have the



Portfolio

ability to alter the collection's content.

A systems administrator will also be helpful in setting up Portfolio on a server to be used over a network. Although most small businesses do not presently require such an all-encompassing program, it may be something to consider down the road.

The Final Decision There is little doubt that both Portfolio and Cumulus go a long way in managing image collections with remarkable ease and clarity. They both have very strong search capabilities and will allow you to creatively organize and manage your images without fear of overly complex manuals. And, although Portfolio costs twice as much as Cumulus, it can be accessed by five users over a small network.

Because you need to spend significantly more money to enjoy as much flexibility with the Cumulus program, the winner is Portfolio 5.0. Of course, if you only need the one-user version, Cumulus is an excellent choice. **MHJ**

rating ★★★★

Cumulus 5.0
\$99, Canto Software, Inc.
415-703-9800
www.canto.com
PowerPC

👍 **Excellent user interface, useful manual, great search engine**

👎 **Multi-user options expensive, not networkable**

rating ★★★★

Portfolio 5.0
\$199, Extensis Products Group
800-796-9798
www.extensis.com
PowerPC

👍 **Networkable, multiple users, great search engine**

👎 **None**

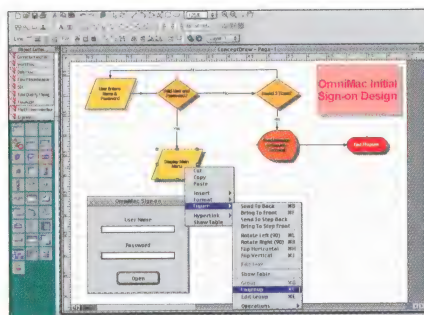
ConceptDraw

Flowcharting and design tools have been missing in action on the Mac. And while it's possible to create a flowchart using Microsoft Word or AppleWorks, it's not nearly as easy as what you can do with programs like the Windows-only Visio. Computer Systems Odessa — a Russia-based software company — is about to change that. ConceptDraw, its cross-platform modular drawing tool, is an excellent drawing program with a wealth of features.

The principal behind template-based drawing programs is simple: provide the user with collections of image objects — such as desks, walls, and other furniture — or standard collections of flowchart objects that can easily be dragged-and-dropped into a document. In all cases, you can link these objects together with connectors to illustrate flow, or have text or color added to them to clearly define

them. ConceptDraw comes with more than 100 drawing objects, stored in about two dozen libraries. These libraries include everything from Mac interface design components to office layout and standard flowcharting objects.

ConceptDraw has all the features that you hope to find in a program of this type. While the program comes with its own object libraries, you can also easily create objects and store them in libraries you create, too. Any object you add to your document can be double-clicked to open a URL, another ConceptDraw document, a page within the current document, or any file on your hard drive. There's also a rubber stamp tool that makes it very easy for you to create multiple copies of your currently selected Library item.



The program does have one shortcoming; you cannot import Visio documents, leaving you out of sync with 90% of the people using this type of application.

The Final Decision ConceptDraw fills a huge void in the Mac application market and proves to be a formidable, cross-platform tool.

Well designed and easy to use, the program will be an excellent resource for all your design and flowcharting needs.

— Jeff Battersby

rating

\$125, Computer Systems Odessa
www.conceptdraw.com

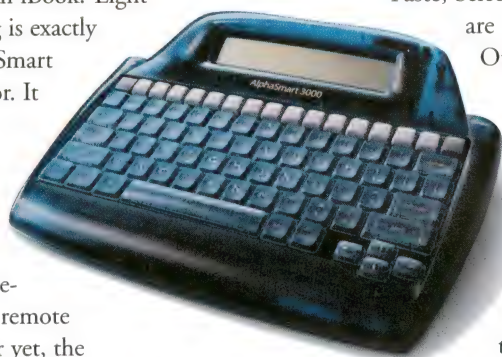
 Excellent drawing tools, fills a missing niche in the Mac application market, cross-platform

 Unable to import Visio documents

AlphaSmart 3000

Have you ever wanted a portable device just for light word processing, without the added heft and expense of a PowerBook or an iBook? Light word processing is exactly what the AlphaSmart 3000 is made for. It is the perfect device for taking quick notes in meetings and classrooms, or for creative writing in remote locations. Better yet, the AlphaSmart connects to your Mac for downloads!

The AlphaSmart combines contemporary looks with remarkable functionality. It weighs only one and a half pounds and is about the size of a standard keyboard. You can type 12 1/2 pages of text



into each of its available eight files for a total of 100 pages. The small four-line LCD screen at the top of the full sized and well built keyboard is easy to read. Navigating around the screen is done with your cursor buttons instead of a mouse, and other functions like Cut and Paste, Select All, and Delete

are also simple to use. Other functions include a well designed spell-check tool and a calculator.

Of course, the neatest function of the AlphaSmart is transferring files to your Mac via a USB cable. You do this by opening a word processing program on your Mac, connecting the USB cable to both devices, and pressing Send on the AlphaSmart. You will immediately see your AlphaSmart file begin to be typed out

on your Mac's screen. For an additional \$25, you can purchase the IR model, which uses Infrared transmission instead of cables!

Unlike traditional word processor programs on your Mac, you don't need to save files to the AlphaSmart, they are stored in RAM. When you turn on the AlphaSmart, the last file you worked on appears. If you want to access another file, just press one of the eight file keys and it will appear. When you are done, just press the On/Off button.

The Final Decision The AlphaSmart is so practical and easy to use, you shouldn't think about looking at anything else if you need light word processing and remarkable mobility.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating

\$197, Smartinput, Inc.
800-366-8323
www.smartinput.com

 Contemporary looks, great storage capacity, easy to use

 None

Movie Magic Screenwriter 2000

When you see a blockbuster movie, do you ever wonder if you could write better dialog than those high-paid screenwriters?

Would you like to be the next Robert Towne (screenwriter of *Chinatown* and *Mission Impossible 2*)?

Perhaps you just want a real shooting script — just like the pros use — for your next iMovie. Maybe it's time you looked at Screenwriter 2000, an excellent script-writing program.

Writing a real script is more difficult than you might imagine — you could spend hours fiddling with tab settings,

document widths, and so on, to get the right look. With Screenwriter 2000 just select the type of script you want and it formats correctly. If you decide your play ought to be a television sitcom you can change the formatting in seconds.

While typing your script, a quick click of the convenient pop-up menu or button bar is all you need to switch from such elements as dialog and scene breaks.

The Tab-Enter

key lists the characters in your script, so you can quickly move from one to the next.

Screenwriter 2000 has a Quick Help menu that lets you figure out what element applies to which portion of a script. There are even sample scripts

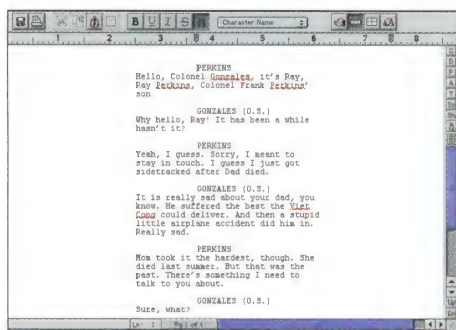
you can use as templates to be sure that your own creation looks just right.

If you've already begun a script in a word processor, Screenwriter 2000 can translate documents from several programs, including Microsoft Word, but you may encounter problems with Scriptware which are being addressed.

The Final Decision Screenwriter is a powerful program that lets you forget the formatting and just think about the story, the dialog, and the action.

Whether you're a pro or an amateur, this program gets my enthusiastic thumbs up.

— Gene Steinberg



rating ★★★★★

\$269, Screenplay Systems Inc.
800-847-8679
www.screenplay.com

Pop-up menus and buttons simplify formatting, good Quick Help, convenient script sharing

Problems translating files from other screenwriting software

PowerShot S100 Digital ELPH

Despite its tiny size, there is a reassuring heft to the PowerShot S100 Digital ELPH, Canon's new mini 2.1-megapixel camera. The unit, which sells for \$599, is unobtrusive enough — at 3.4" x 2.2" x 1.1" — to slip easily into your shirt, jacket, or pants pocket, but somehow it's easy to keep track of.

The ELPH features photographic benefits designed to appeal to serious amateurs as well as weekend snap shooters, not the least of which is its 2.1-megapixel CCD and optical zoom, which approximates a 35mm-70mm lens. These specifications guarantee great images. The ELPH lets you select from

auto, manual, black and white, and stitch-assist modes, the latter of which helps you create panoramic pictures.

The Digital ELPH also sports a graceful design wherein all controls are located either below the 1.5-inch LCD panel

or near the shutter. Both optical and digital zooms are easy to find and use. Because the controls are so tightly scaled, I had to press the On/Off switch hard to operate the camera.

The ELPH does have its

quirks, and one is that

Automatic mode only supports the fine/large image resolution. That means if you shoot in auto mode, you are limited to 12 shots on the enclosed 8MB CompactFlash card (though you could buy a card with more memory). You could switch from automatic to manual mode and lower your image res-



olution, but then the camera defaults back to auto mode after you preview your image, and that was frustrating. There's a special setup to prevent that from happening, but it's not obvious.

The ELPH comes with a convenient rechargeable lithium ion battery and recharger with a retractable plug. However, the camera had to be recharged quite often. Then, too, for the price I would have appreciated a serial cable in addition to the USB, as well as a carrying case.

The Final Decision The Digital ELPH takes great pictures and is well designed and easy to operate. Despite its quirks, it's a wicked-cool camera.

— Jackie Dove

rating ★★★★★

\$599, Canon
800-652-2666
www.usa.canon.com

Takes great pictures, very small, well designed, easy to use, good zoom

Limited options in Auto mode, reverts to default after preview, no carrying case or serial cable.

FamilyEssentials

How often have you wanted to create a card for a birthday, a brochure for your small business, or a spreadsheet specifically designed to help you manage your home mortgage, on your Mac? For most people these tasks can be time consuming and even downright frustrating. Formatting tools are not always easy to find and frequent references to a manual can be required. Well, for those of you who use Microsoft Office 98 on your Macs, the solution to these problems and many more has arrived.

Canon has just released OfficeReady FamilyEssentials, a set of more than 400 templates designed with the family's needs in mind. Once you install this program onto your hard drive, it creates a button on the toolbar of both Microsoft Word and Excel called Start OfficeReady FamilyEssentials. When you click on the button the program is launched, and it creates an extra toolbar with a variety of useful templates and tools.

As you are working in a Word or Excel file you can use the OfficeReady tool buttons to change the font and size of selected text, easily put frames around text and images, import images, and use a neat 3D text tool that lets you do creative things with ordinary text.

If you are specifically interested in the templates, you may click on the FamilyEssentials icon on the toolbar in Word or Excel and the New window offers you a selection of templates. In Word, for instance, you can choose from Memos, Letters and Faxes, and even Web Pages. For each of these categories there is a helpful Wizard, which will allow you to easily integrate styles and formats with unique data that you enter.

Family Essentials for Excel operates in exactly the same manner, only the tem-



plate categories are different and fewer. You can select from Spreadsheet Solutions and OfficeReady FamilyEssentials. The OfficeReady

category lists a voluminous range of spreadsheet-style templates for everything from managing your home mortgage and automobile insurance, to daily planners and class schedules.

The Final Decision At the nice price of \$29 this program has something for everyone in the family. You will immediately notice how organized you can be at the click of a few buttons.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating ★★★★★
\$29, Canon USA, Inc. 800-385-2155 www.software.canon.com
Great selection of templates, easy to use, inexpensive, fun
None

ScanMaker 3600

Scanners — good scanners — are getting less and less expensive these days. Case in point: the ScanMaker 3600 from Microtek, a sturdy, well built scanner that you can get away with for less than \$90.

ScanWizard, the accompanying scanning software, is very sensibly arranged. It asks you questions about your original, the scale of your scan, and your purpose — whether you want to view the image on the screen, print on an inkjet, or print on a monochrome laser. In Advanced mode, you're presented with the full



gamut of scanning tools — such as contrast, brightness, white point, and color curves. The advanced mode also provides thumbnails showing a preview of your image before and after you tweak

various settings, which is a nice touch.

But when in thumbnail mode I found it very hard to select a white point with the eyedropper tool — even though I used the tool multiple times in an area I knew to be white, the program kept registering different readings.

Putting this scanner through the paces, scanning text, printed graphics, and photos, I found that it captured some intricate details, and a large spectrum of colors. It was, however, a bit on the slow side, taking a little over three

and a half minutes to scan a letter-sized document at 300 dpi (dots per inch) resolution, and almost a full minute to scan a 3" x 5" photo at 72 dpi. Also, although it can accommodate up to letter-sized paper, it can't quite capture a whole page — it cuts off a bit from the top and bottom.

The Final Decision The ScanMaker 3600 is a very good, robust scanner for a very low price. Despite its quirks, it provides good quality, and has a software interface that overall is sensible and easy to pick up.

— David Weiss

rating ★★★★★
\$89, Microtek 800-654-4160 www.microtek.com USB Required
Inexpensive, captures a rich variety of colors, powerful, easy-to-use driver
A bit slow, doesn't capture a full page, some adjustments are hard to make

SynchMaster 900NF

If you are using graphics software, page-layout programs, or Web-editing tools, you understand the need for a spacious monitor. You might consider the Samsung 900NF, a 19-inch flat screen monitor that is easy on the wallet and the eyes.

The monitor actually has 18 inches of viewable area on a completely flat screen, displays text and graphics nicely, and colors are bright and clear. The .25mm dot pitch is reasonable for a \$469 monitor. The dot pitch is one of the primary ways to gauge the resolution quality of a monitor, and measures the diagonal distance between like-colored phosphorus dots on the



screen. The lower the number, the better the quality. The dot pitch number can range from 0.15mm to 0.30mm. You will be hard-pressed to find a monitor at this price range with a lower dot pitch number. Unfortunately, the 900NF displays

moderate fuzziness around text and may leave you wanting more clarity in areas like the toolbar. To Samsung's credit, you can adjust for focus in the control panel.

The control panel that drops down from the front of the 900NF is designed well,

just like the one on the 700NF (MacHome July, 2000), but unlike its brethren, this control panel feels cheap and lacks a high quality fit and finish. Adjusting the panel's small buttons is relatively straightforward, and you will

be able to set the screen to your liking in a matter of minutes. There is a very slight sag in the top of the monitor, due to minor variables in the manufacturing process.

If you are so inclined, you can also purchase an optional USB hub that slides neatly into the back of the 900NF's round base. This \$35 option will let you plug up to four peripherals into the unit and keeps all of your cables within reach.

The Final Decision There is a lot to like about the 900NF — a large screen that displays color and text well, and a price that won't break your budget. The minor flaws shouldn't keep you from looking at the 900NF.

— Ross Tibbits

rating

\$469, Samsung
Electronics America, Inc.
800-726-7864
www.samsungmonitor.com

 Nice price, flat screen, optional USB hub

 Moderately fuzzy text on screen, fragile control panel

Timeslips 6

The phrase "time is money" is not a cliché if you're a computer consultant like me, or you're in the advertising or legal fields, which involve charging by the hour. So how do you keep track of your billable time? Do you use little Post-it notes, scribble on pieces of paper, or use Apple's Stickies program to mark the hours that you have worked? Timeslips is a very powerful program that can make your life easier. It is a one-stop billing center where you not only keep track of the time you spend working for your customers, but prepare the

invoices and track accounts receivable.

But this isn't an application you can just install, launch, and begin to use without some help. In an era in which manuals are slim or non-existent and help menus rule, Timeslips takes the old-fashioned route. The User Guide is just

shy of an inch thick, and you need to study the instructions, particularly the tutorial, before you get started.

Once you get going, you'll appreciate Timeslips'

Navigator dock,

where you can access any function you want. It displays eight icons — Bill Cycle, Time & Expense, Transactions, Client, Consultant, Activity & Expense, File Maintenance, and Settings. Click on an icon and there's a set of handy

buttons to access the features in that category.

Despite its power, Timeslips remains a pretty lean application. It fills less than 8MB on your hard drive and will work on any Mac with System 7.0 or later and 4MB available RAM.

The Final Decision If you are not prepared to spend time learning how to use this application, Timeslips probably isn't for you. But if you're willing to give the manual some intense study, you'll be rewarded with a time-billing system that will help enhance your bottom line.

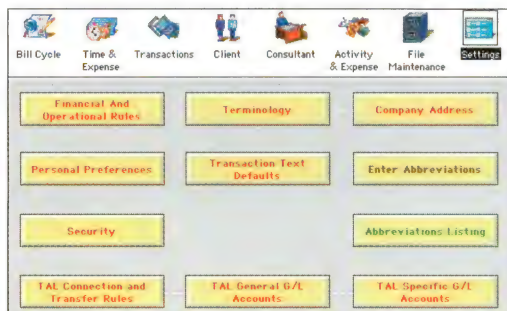
— Gene Steinberg

rating

\$179, Timeslips
800-285-0999
www.timeslips.com

 Good Stopwatch feature, Navigator offers quick access to major features, helpful links to accounting software, works with System 7.0 or higher

 Requires careful study of manual



X-keys

Entering and re-entering macro formulas, addresses, and other information into video editing programs and spreadsheets will drive anyone a little loony. Finally, PI Engineering has developed X-keys, a programmable keypad that works much like the speed dialer on your telephone.

X-keys comes in two different configurations — 20 keys or 58 keys. For this review we sampled the 58-key unit. To program a particular key, simply flip the programming switch and tap the key you want to program. Then, when the programming light blinks twice, start typing a macro formula or address (on your standard keyboard) and X-keys remembers your keystrokes.



When you are done, tap the X-key keypad once more and wait for the programming light to flash once. By repeating this process you can program all 58 keys. Next, return the programming switch to its original position and you are ready to use this clever device to save you a lot of time.

While programming, X-keys had difficulty remembering all the keystrokes. I fixed this problem by typing slowly. Measuring nine inches by eight inches, this expanded keypad has colored keys that have removable faces so you can label them. You are provided two sheets of paper with grid patterns. By cutting out these little boxes, you create labels for the individual keys — all 58 of them! It's like being a kid again. You might wish they had spent the money to have the sheets

perforated, because once you have programmed a key, you have to take one of the little square labels and label it. You pop-off the top of a key and place the label in it with a special tool that is included.

The Final Decision The concept behind X-keys is excellent. If you are constantly wishing you didn't have to recall certain information regularly for macro programs and data input, this is a product you should look at. The problem is that programming it might be so frustrating that you won't appreciate its true potential — quick data entry.

— Ross Tibbits

rating ★★★★★

\$149, PI Engineering
800-628-3185
www.xkeys.com

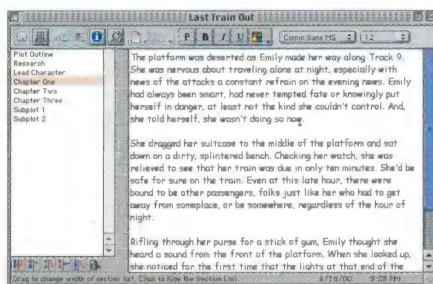
👍 Slick design, useful for data-entry applications, USB compatible

👎 Poor keystroke recognition, slow programming

Z-Write 1.1

Mac users are as passionate about their word processors as they are about their computers. For some, simplicity is scribe heaven; others drool over feature-laden hulks. Regardless of which camp you fall in with, Stone Table Software's Z-Write is so powerful you may never tackle another writing project without it.

Z-Write's dual-pane interface is the first sign that it means business. The left-hand pane contains a list of "Sections" for every component of a writing project. For example, in writing a novel you might create Sections for each chapter, a biography Section for your main character, a Section for research, and a Section for



notes. Selecting a Section displays its contents in the right-hand pane, which is a standard text-editing window. Z-Write's text-handling capabilities include drag-and-drop, cut-and-paste, basic formatting, and sophisticated features like bookmarks, hyperlinks, and glossaries.

After you've written several Sections, Z-Write allows you to duplicate,

merge, or rearrange them any way you like. Section management is handled through a row of buttons at the bottom of the Section pane, or from the Section Tools menu. When a project is complete, you can

export it as a text file for fine-tuning and formatting in your regular word processor.

In practice, Z-Write is astounding. The ability to see, access, and edit every Section of a project from a single window is downright revolutionary, bringing

organization and focus to the task of getting words down on paper.

Despite Z-Write's lack of support for graphics, tables, footnotes, and tabs, Z-Write was designed to supplement, rather than replace, your current word processor. Z-Write's "write now, format later" philosophy may actually appeal to writers who tend to waste time formatting instead of actually writing.

The Final Decision Z-Write is fast, stable, powerful, and affordable enough every writer. If you're looking for a full-featured word processor, look elsewhere. But serious writers who want to maximize their productivity, and perhaps even improve their writing, should immediately download Z-Write for themselves.

— Alan S. Golub

rating ★★★★★

\$20 (shareware), Stone Table Software
www.designwrite.com/sts

👍 Very powerful and intuitive, good price, great approach to writing

👎 Limited formatting capabilities

Website Creativity

Using Freeway 3 to Maximize Your Business Potential

Websites are so prevalent today that any business without one is considered by many to be out of business. The problem facing small-business owners is two-fold: learning how to build a Website is time consuming and often difficult to master, and it's expensive to hire a consultant to do the work for you. Fortunately, creating professional-looking Websites is much easier today than ever before, thanks to Freeway 3, the latest version of this respected Website-creation program.

The programmers of Freeway 3 have very nicely integrated WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) programming with HTML (the programming language of the Web). Say good-bye to programming in HTML.

Creating your home page in Freeway 3 is uncomplicated. The Getting To Know Freeway 3 guide walks you through the process of building a Website in literally a matter of minutes. There is an in-depth guide as well, which you'll need, because building Websites isn't always so easy.

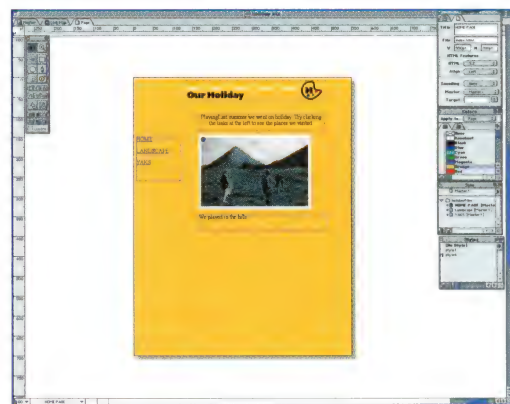
The main page of the program provides you with an outline of your blank Web page surrounded by white space — which is useful as extra work space. On the left-and right-hand side of the page are small palettes labeled Tools, Colors, Styles, and

a Times font, size 12, centered, in blue, then apply that style whenever you like.

The Inspector allows you to quickly modify the overall appearance of any page by selecting color, fonts, and the size of text and graphics windows. The Inspector palette is particularly useful when you import images. For instance, if you import an image, you can label the image as a GIF or JPEG.

Once you have created your Website, uploading your site to a server is quite simple. You only need to get an ftp address from your internet service provider, which will allow you to send your files to the server — it's that easy.

The Final Decision Freeway 3 offers you a very comprehensive and easy-to-use set of Website-creation tools. The well written Quick Start guide is a great introduction to Web design, but as with most Web programs, you will need time to master this art. **MHJ**



By Ross Tibbits

Inspector. The Tools palette is what you'll need first to put text and images into your page. This is as simple as selecting the Sketch HTML tool or the Sketch Graphic tool and drawing a box on your page to place text or graphics. Then, to add text, simply click inside the box and start typing — or drag-and-drop from other applications. This box can have its own color, specific size, and unique text color, and it can be moved anywhere on the page.

One tool of note is the Table tool. Tables allow you to neatly organize images and text on your pages, giving them a very professional look on the Web. To make a table you just click on the tool's icon and then draw the area you want the table to occupy. When you release your mouse button, a window appears asking you how many columns and rows you would like in your table. Simply enter the appropriate numbers and voila, your table is made!

Use the Color palette to customize the colors of any element of your Website as well.

In the Style palette you can create styles of text. If you want

rating ★★★★★

Freeway 3
\$299, SoftPress Systems
Limited
800-853-6454
www.softpress.com
PowerPC Required

👍 Excellent WYSIWYG interface, useful starter guide, great tools, easy to use

👎 None

Hearing Voices

Tune into Internet Radio

Because radio broadcasting is designed to be local, listening to broadcasts outside your region — perhaps thousands of miles away — is inherently problematic. The range of most stations makes remote listening impossible. Then again, you may as well be stranded on a desert island if you miss your favorite local program while at work. What's the solution? Internet Radio!

In the old days, if you missed a radio broadcast you were simply out of luck.

But today, audio technology over the Internet lets you hear remote broadcasts online, at least some of the time, and with varying degrees of quality and reliability. While the vast majority of radio stations traditionally broadcast over the AM or FM band in specified markets, a growing

By Jackie Dove

number of stations are Webcasting, making programming available on the Web via a technology called streaming.

Employing an assortment of technologies such as encoding software, streaming servers, and players to boost a short broadcast signal around the world, Web-based radio lets you tune into broadcasts from anywhere on the planet and hear a combination of specially produced streaming broadcasts, or live, real-time streams. And, you can catch the program that starts at 9 a.m., when you hit your desk in the morning, and listen to it during your lunch break. Cool, right? But how do you listen to Internet radio? How do you find stations? And do they all work?

Are You Being Served?

Listening to Internet radio requires a player, just like listening to the radio requires, well, a radio. There are several software Internet radio players for the Mac, available for download, that will let you pick up broadcasts. When we refer to Internet radio, we mean a broadcast signal streamed in real time or a program that has been encoded for streaming playback later. But there are variations of that theme. You've probably heard of Apple's QuickTime player, which features its own set of audio/video channels.



Some Internet channels are specifically developed with radio-like content designed to be heard online but not broadcast over the airwaves. There are also tons of entertainment Websites that feature pre-recorded multimedia presentations that will also play on your player. Most players also feature a network of Websites and music/news/talk channels, while many Websites feature directories and compilations of radio stations.

Some places to find Internet radio stations are RealPlayer's Website (www.real.com), the Yahoo radio page (<http://radio.yahoo.com>), and the Lycos radio page (<http://music.lycos.com/radio>).

Streaming Glitches

As streaming audio is not a perfected technology, be prepared for glitches.

Clicking on an audio link doesn't guarantee that it will work because you are depending on the quality of the streaming broadcast produced by the station and the player you are using.

For example, some stations may not offer streaming broadcasts at the time you try to connect, while others have too many listeners trying to connect at once and won't have a stream available to you. In addition, your ability to hear a broadcast depends on the program the station uses to encode the audio.

If your player is not compatible with the broadcast encoder (as often happens with Microsoft Windows Media Player), then you will have to download a separate player to hear such broadcasts. Then too, a station may be broadcasting at too high a bandwidth for those with standard modems, or you not have configured your player properly.

Some stations force you to listen to commercial messages before streaming the audio, and sometimes the links are outdated and can't be found. It is also possible that you will encounter error messages even if you have all the current software. You will also find that if you are doing other processor-intensive activities on your computer, there can be interruptions in reception. Make sure you have enough memory to keep your connection stable while running other applications to avoid crashes.

Think of Internet radio as you would any other challenging hobby or sport that requires patience and experimentation. But the results are often enlightening and enjoyable.

Connection Please

Several kinds of players will let you listen

to the vast majority of broadcasts now online: RealPlayer version 7 (the free player was in beta for version 8 as of this writing), an MP3 player (of which there are several varieties), and Microsoft Windows Media Player (which lets you hear broadcasts encoded with that soft-



Apple's QuickTime 4 player (above) gives you many streaming channels. RealPlayer 7 gives you audio/video channels as well as access to most streaming broadcasts.

occupy those streams, it's just like getting a busy signal on your telephone. You'll just have to log in later.

Streaming Media

Internet radio depends on streaming technology. When audio or video streams over the Internet, you hear a signal as it is being transmitted over the wire. You don't have to wait for it to download before you can begin to see or hear its contents.

What do you hear when you tune into an Internet station? You can either hear a broadcast in real time, or you can hear any number of broadcasts that may not be airing at the moment.

Got Tunes? Talk?

Live 365.com - www.live365.com
Atomic Radio - www.atomicpop.com/radiobrain
Radio Spy - www.radiospys.com
Open Radio Archive Network Group - www.orang.org

ware). With those kinds of players, you'll have a better chance of hearing your selection without an error message. Since RealPlayer 7 can also play MP3 files, you won't need a specific MP3 player to hear MP3 files. We'll talk more about the specific players shortly.

The performance of streaming media depends on the speed and quality of your connection. If you have a 28.8 Kbps modem, chances are you will not hear as smooth a signal as someone with a 56K modem. However, some 56K modem connections can be noisy. A DSL or cable modem connection will likely provide smoother reception, as will a T1 line at the office (though corporate firewalls can block some streaming audio). Downloading email and file transfers may also cause interruptions, as will general Internet traffic.

Reception also depends on the radio station's servers. Since incoming connections cost money, a station may elect to have only a few outgoing streams. If you log in at a time when other listeners

Depending on the time of day and the station's broadcast schedule, you either will hear a pre-recorded broadcast or a live feed.

How? With three pieces of software: an encoder, server, and player. The encoder is software that translates the sound into a specific file format. This process includes sampling and compress-

ing the audio so it can be sent over the Internet. The server software for audio data streaming is designed to send out multiple data streams, and must be connected to a computer with a high-bandwidth (fast) connection. A separate audio data stream is then sent to each user on a first-come, first-served basis.

The player, also called a "plug-in" or "helper application," receives the audio data stream from the server and translates it to the sound you hear.

Below is a list of the main kinds of players available on the Mac. You don't need to have all of them, and you may already have a version of some of them. Audio technology is being enhanced daily, and players may be upgraded often to improve your listening experience.

RealPlayer 7

RealPlayer from RealNetworks (www.real.com) is the granddaddy of Internet audio players. It lets you listen to streaming audio and video on the Internet at modem speeds of 28.8 Kbps or faster.

RealPlayer is generally reliable, especially when connecting to its own audio and video channels, but the program is finicky about having the most current version installed. Sometimes, you'll hit a music link and, instead of your desired audio clip, you receive an error message telling you to download a newer version. RealPlayer Plus, for \$30, provides some enhancements over the free version. RealPlayer can play most audio files as well as MP3 files, however it will not play Windows Media Player files.

You may notice that whenever you access an audio server with RealPlayer, an icon that points to the stream is placed on your desktop. It is not the audio file, but it behaves as a shortcut to your favorite broadcasts. There is no harm in trashing this icon.

SoundJam MP 2.1.1

If you have designated SoundJam MP from Casady & Greene (www.soundjam.com) as your default MP3 player, all streaming MP3 files will automatically open with SoundJam. SoundJam MP Plus 2.1.1, for \$50 (\$40 via elec-

tronic download), gives you excellent audio quality, is extremely stable, and very user-friendly. It also lets you both encode audio from other formats into MP3 and create your own playlists.

You can alter the interface by outfitting SoundJam with the skins of your choice, such as making your player look like a medieval castle or a guitar.

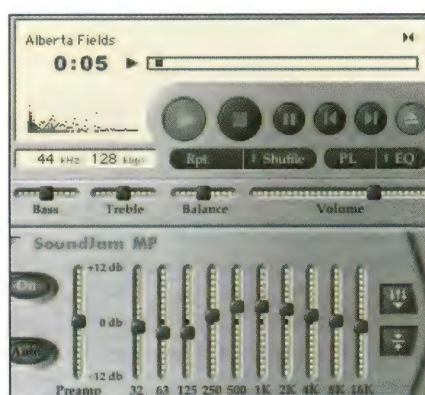
Destiny Media Player 1.4.1

Destiny Media Player (www.destiny-software.com) has a friendly interface and lets you play both pre-recorded tunes and real-time audio streams. Destiny has its own network of stations, or it can also launch with any MP3 broadcast. You do not need to have your browser launched to hear the Destiny player, and it can play any MP3 file in your hard drive.

The Destiny player lets you view artist information such as album covers, discographies, tour information, and liner notes while listening to the music. It also provides a direct link to the Website as well as an instant purchase option for CDs and digital music files.

AMP Radio 1.6.7

AMP Radio from Subband Software (www.subband.com) is an MP3 player



that lets you tune into a variety of stations monitored by its built-in tracker, and lets you hear a variety of Mac audio formats. It sports a streamlined body and gives you several audio controls. Version 1.6.7 even features a plug-in that lets you broadcast live streams from your computer via the Live 365 server.

Windows Media Player (6.3 beta 2)

Microsoft Windows Media Player (www.microsoft.com) comes in a beta edition for the Mac, and comes in handy if you want to listen to broadcasts encoded with the Windows Media Player, since nothing else will play them.

QuickTime 4.1.2

If you want to hear any of the streaming video from CNN, Fox News, Disney, and other commercial channels, go to



the Apple Website (www.apple.com), download QuickTime (the free version; the Pro version is \$30), and then choose your channel. Thereafter, all you'll have to do is select the channel and QuickTime will launch.

Aladdin Tuner

Aladdin Tuner from Aladdin Systems (www.aladdinsys.com) is a neat browser/player that makes it easy for you to find radio stations. Aladdin Tuner, which works in conjunction with RealPlayer, has a database of more than 3,400 streaming audio and video webcasts from all over the world. You can test drive a demo before deciding whether to buy it for \$30. Tuner is fun because it gives you a highly visual regional map of broadcasts. It also plays your own CDs and MP3s and connects to CDDb online CD database for info about your CDs.

Listen in

Internet radio can be a rollicking good time, if you can get past the glitches and idiosyncrasies you'll encounter at first. After that, it's happy listening. **MHJ**

Chair Extraordinaire.



Wouldn't it be great to have a chair you could love as much as your MAC? Wouldn't it be great to sit at your MAC with no back pain? BodyBilt chairs were designed from the study of astronauts resting in the weightlessness of space, to determine the body's preferred posture. Ten adjustable features and a unique, pressure-reducing seat contour to help you emulate that natural, stress-free position in the comfort of your own home...or office...or both. For more information on BodyBilt chairs, visit www.bodybilt.com or call us at 800.364.5673. Mention this ad and receive a free Ixla Photo Easy DualCam digital camera! Included is the Digital DualCam 640 Camera, software, cables for both TV/Video & USB – even the 2 AA batteries to start taking digital pictures right out of the box. Be sure to specify MAC or PC when you order. Visit us in Booth #2105 at Mac World Expo, July 19–21.



BODY BILT

From Space To The Workplace



Lunch Box Bonanza!

The front page of this Website is worth the visit! It shows an old picture of a kid (I assume

it's Jim Cassidy, the

author of the site)

dressed for school

and holding his '59 Gunsmoke

kit. (Sets of lunch boxes and

their matching thermoses are apparently called

"kits" by lunch box collectors.) Click on that

Gunsmoke kit to enter a world — make that a

paradise — of lunch boxes. I particularly

enjoyed the gallery link, which lead me to old

favorites like Fat Albert, the Bee Gees (be still

my heart, I think I had that

very same kit!), and The

Partridge Family. The site

includes links to lunch box

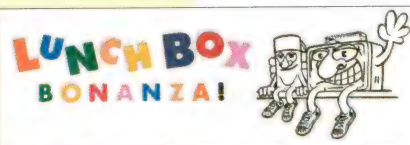
books; lunch box news; a

Trading Post for buying, sell-

ing, and trading; and of

course there are classic lunch boxes For Sale.

www.cassidyframes.com/box



School Year Gear

I'm not a student anymore, but if I were, I'm sure my Mom and I would be getting ready for our annual back-to-school shopping spree. Each year, from kindergarten through college, I pretty much needed the same new goodies: new clothes (except for those years in uniform), new shoes, and new (and some used) books. You know the list. This month I'll be living vicariously — revisiting those golden rule days — as I introduce you to a few fun Websites where you can spend your lunch money.

The Writer's Edge

I for one am always in search of the perfect pen, the pen that will perform as a seamless conduit between mind and paper. It's gotta flow, feel right in your hand, and make you happy to jot down anything from an outline of a research paper to a grocery list. This site has a bunch of great pens at fair prices: the smooooth Sensa pen (add as many Os as you like), the fun Fisher Space pens that write upside down (Jerry coveted one on "Seinfeld," remember?), and glow-in-the-dark Power-Glo pens (that also work as mini flashlights), to name a few. The site has Hot Specials, pen refills, and Extreme Stories from customers who've had success with their pens in the most outlandish climates and situations on Earth. www.thewritersedge.com, 800-639-9773



eBookBags

A backpack is like a friend — you choose it because you like it, and if you lose it you'll probably freak out for awhile and then mourn. Yep, a good portion of a student's life is carried around in a backpack, so it's no wonder such care goes into picking one out. This site has a great selection of brand names like JanSport, Timberland, and High Sierra.

Good detail is given for each backpack (or bookbag), including whether or not it has a

padded strap, how many and what kind of accessory compartments it has, and how durable it is. The site also features waistpacks, cell phone and eyeglass cases, duffel bags, and briefcases. Choose a good one and it could very well last a lifetime.

www.ebookbags.com, 877-843-2247



Half

As the name implies, everything at this site is (at least) 50% off. Students and non-students alike will find everything they need: books, CDs, movies, and games. Join for free and become a member of an exciting selling and buying community — at the end of the school year, gather up the books that you don't want to keep in your personal collection and put them up for sale. (I found a hardcover version of *Oliver Twist* for \$5.50 — surely that person has another copy!) If you want something that isn't available, put it on your Wish List, and the folks at Half will send an email to notify you as soon as it is. If you need something right away that isn't available (it's hard to imagine, with over 4 million listings, that this is possible), Half also provide a shopping engine to find low prices with other online retailers. How considerate!

www.half.com

Stop Waiting In Line To Get Online!

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Internet Sharing Device

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The Standard for
Wireless Fidelity.

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The Upgrade Company

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Internet Integration

Tightening School Ties Over the Internet

When I was a kid there was no Internet. During my K-12 school years, which started 25 years ago (yikes), technological advances were indeed being made, but they had no immediate impact on me. Back then, in fact, one's overall computer orientation was an option.

(In high school I fared okay in the one suggested computer science class I attended — “Mom, I got a C, you know, for computer.”) Instead of worrying about a decent browser, my main concern was learning how to use the card catalog to find a book in the library. Today, as we all know, things have quite changed. The power of the Internet looms large, and the buzz it creates in school hallways gets louder every year.

School Tool

The Internet has indeed opened the floodgates, and touches most aspects of today's busy culture. The educational system is certainly no exception — 65% of classrooms across the U.S. are connected. A number of companies have emerged in the past couple years in response to national concerns over the Internet's place in K-12 education. wwwrrr.com (formed in February 1999, and pro-

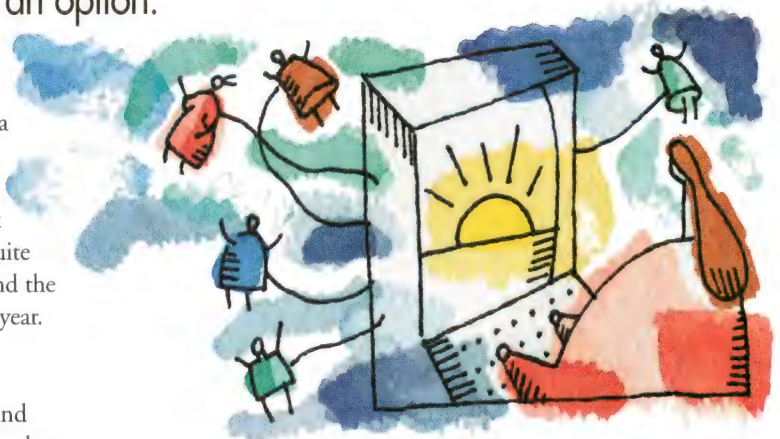
By Carolyn Blackburn

nounced ‘whir’) is one of these companies/sites — they offer a line of services and products that enable teachers, students, and parents to use the Internet more effectively.

President and CEO of [wwwrrr](http://wwwrrr.com), Paul Gullickson, has a “sandbox” theory, which he uses to dispel the notion (feared by some) that traditional learning will be replaced by the Internet. Like most who are the brains behind operations like [wwwrrr](http://wwwrrr.com), Gullickson and his colleagues are former educators — they believe in the integration of classroom and Internet. “The sandbox is still as important as technology,” he explains. “But the Internet is a valuable tool with unlimited possibilities.”

Website District

These possibilities stem from common ground — when



schools use companies like bigchalk.com to put up their own Websites, then teachers, students, and parents become connected in an unparalleled way, with one place to go to become active and independent members of the school's community.

With a school Website, many parties can contribute to the site's appearance. Students can make sure that noteworthy activities are kept current, staff people can update the lunch menu, and teachers can daily freshen assignments, including due dates and extra credit questions. Traditional Websites are not as easily upkept, and they're generally more expensive than pre-formatted Websites. School Websites created with these new sites are either free, if they run banner ads like they do at myschoolonline.com, or reasonably priced. A school account costs \$1,200 per year, on average, and fulfills communication needs including unified email and Website-builder kits — the school just needs an ISP and a browser.

“It's nice to be able to see so much information about the school in one place,” shares Eileen Robb Trebesch, a parent with two children at Valley Crossing Community School in

Woodbury, MN, where they have an account with wwwrrr. "I like the fact that parents can go online to review information about their children's classrooms."

Within the school's Website, teachers can put up individual pages for their classes. This saves teachers time, in that they don't have to expend energy building a Web page from scratch. The pages can be as straightforward or as personalized as they wish. At myschoolonline.com there's a BestSite Showcase, honoring how some teachers use their space. Mr. Hein, from Elizabeth, NJ, set up his page as a jumping-off point for students embarking on college careers, with links including "Chart Your Course!" and "Plan Your Future!"

Communication Studies

A hugely important part of the agenda at companies like myschoolonline is getting parents more involved in their children's school activities. Back in the day, parents met with teachers twice a year, tops. (Parents Night was a dreaded evening for most kids. But for me, well, was that really enough time for my teachers to express to my parents how wonderful I was?) Now parents and teachers can communicate freely, and as often as they deem necessary, with relevant questions or issues that come up during the school day. How? Via email, of course.

Some teachers fear that stuffed inboxes might add hours to existing, demanding schedules. But there's a solid idea behind the push for more frequent communication between teachers and parents. "When parents get involved, an overall, and often quick, behavior change will occur in students," says Gullickson. The hope is that in the future, because of steady parent involvement, a teacher's need to discipline in the middle of class will diminish. Reduced absenteeism and higher graduation rates are also in the forecast.

"Recently, a student who has some challenges came in and did a fabulous job on an in-class assignment, so I fired off an email to his parents, right then and there," says Chris Mewes, a social

studies teacher at Washburn High School in Minneapolis, MN, where they use wwwrrr. "They were thrilled to get it and were able to praise him as soon as he got home." Likewise, teachers are able to communicate unpleasant events or when students are falling behind.

"I have had more interaction with the parents of my students within the last six months of using wwwrrr than in a normal year of making phone calls," says Mewes.

Educating Educators

For the most part, using the Internet is instinctual — log on, search for something, and go get it. But sites like bigchalk.com offer reference tools that take the guesswork out of being Internet savvy in the educational arena. Among their suite of tools is Explor-Asource, an online service that parents and teachers can use to quickly find resources that address classroom learning needs and educational standards.

The multi-faceted wwwrrr also offers online guidance with their Internet series: Internet basics, Internet@school, and Internet@home. The school section shows teachers how to best make use of the Net in their classrooms, including conducting collaborative projects between groups of students across the globe. The home section includes interactive lessons for parents in online safety, banking and investing (have to save up for Junior's college tuition!), and more.

"Without training, the full value of all of the resources that are only a click away on the Internet cannot be realized," says Gullickson.



Pep Rally

The scores are in, and students are on the same page as their parents and teachers. Using the Internet as a means of better communication, in particular, is a source of enthusiasm for most students — they prefer, without hesitation, that their parents and teachers have a more open dialogue. And they like having access to their teachers when the school day is over.

"If I forget what an assignment was, I'll jump on the Web and find out what I was supposed to do," says Troy DeLuney, a student at South High School in

Minneapolis, where they use wwwrrr.

School Websites also contribute to school spirit and pride. Kids like showing off sites to their families and friends, and they enjoy feeling connected to their school's community.

"I like that I can see Valley Crossing's name on the same page as my name," says Cody Robb, a 7-year-old student at Valley Crossing.

check it out...

If kids are online after school, they should know about **headbone.com** — a community geared toward kids 8 - 14, with features, games, and safe socializing.

Roll Call

Before long, most schools will be connected and taking advantage of sites like wwwrrr.com (which has accounts in 40 states), myschoolonline.com, and bigchalk.com. If you're an interested teacher, student, or parent, approach your school's administrators with the idea — they should know about the benefits that will, without a doubt, strengthen your school's community. **MNJ**

By Carolyn Blackburn

MacSoft Where? Right Here!

This first page of news is dedicated to MacSoft, the trusted and adored Mac game publisher that announced a cornucopia of goodies for your family at Macworld New York in July. MacSoft has licensed the following titles from Hasbro Interactive, so if you've been waiting to take a walk down memory lane on your Mac, lace up your best pair of hiking boots! MacSoft promises a bunch of classic names, from Monopoly to Candy Land, for families and their Macs by the end of 2000.

www.wizardworks.com/macsoft, 800-229-2714

Retro Fun for Kids

The Mac Kids Pack is the working title for a must-have quartet that makes me wish I was a kid again. This bundle includes two of my very favorite P words: Play-Doh and Playskool. *Candy Land Adventure* and *Mr. Potato Head Saves Veggie Valley* join *Play-Doh Creations*



CANDY LAND
ADVENTURE

and *Playskool Puzzles* — talk about a promising gift idea for little ones with new iMacs. *Candy Land Adventure* intro-

duces youngsters to the Peppermint Forest, where they must find King Kandy and sharpen their early math and reading skills along the way. There's a drought in *Veggie Valley*, so players must hone problem-solving and investigative skills to help Mr. Potato Head return rain to the land. Potatoes, sweets, and Ps — a full plate indeed!

Keep Truckin'

I've heard several grown men speak with an unparalleled fondness about their Tonka trucks, but now they can revisit rather than reminisce about boyhood with the *Mac Tonka Truck Pack*. This is a dynamic duo. Tonka

Construction gears kids up for building: construction sites, bridges, buildings, and more. Of course, kids have the option of demolishing and building again. (We are talking about Tonka, after all.) *Tonka Search and Rescue* puts youngsters in charge of land, air, and sea rescue missions. There are 14 3D vehicles to tinker with in the Tonka garage, and kids can print out customized medals of honor and license plates. Maybe your youngster will put your name on the license plate of your favorite truck!



TV Favorites

If you can't get enough of Vanna or Alex (watch out, Regis!),

Wheel of Fortune and *Jeopardy* CD-ROMs

are making their way to the Mac. Each game takes you from the audience and puts you in the contestant's seat. The surroundings and gameplay remain the same in each title, plus fabulous 3D graphics, sound effects, and music.



Rule the World ... or Just Vegas

What's your favorite board game of all time?

If either Monopoly or Risk spring to mind, you might want to get your hot little hands on *Risk 2* and

Monopoly Casino, also on

the way to Macs from MacSoft by the end of the year. *Monopoly Casino* combines all things Monopoly with Vegas excitement, including slot machines and Mr. Monopoly dealing blackjack.

Risk 2 is set in the year 1812 — will your empire rule the world? Enjoy the familiarity of this classic, including trading cards for armies and dice rolling to outdo your opponent, as well as simultaneous-turn play for networked players and territory depth enhancements for attack and defense strategies Napoleon would be proud of.



Bountiful Bus

The Just Think Foundation, whose mission is teaching kids to think critically so they can evaluate the messages they see and hear in our media-driven society, is on a roll with Mobile Media. They turned an old yellow school bus, complete with iMacs and AirPorts, into a traveling classroom of media, art, and technology. The non-profit organization (founded in 1995) has been booking the Mobile Media bus around the Bay Area, focusing on visiting under-resourced communities. Sessions, each accommodating about 15 kids, include an array of learning — from basic media theory, to creating Websites using Adobe PageMill, to the production of short videos using iMovie. With the support of educators, enthusiasm of kids, and visits from people like Dr. Maya Angelou, it doesn't look like this bus will be slowing down anytime soon.



Batter Up!

Summer will soon be a part of the distant past, and we'll contemplate how the months were spent. Hopefully, like Lou Desiderio and his family, we'll have some extra special memories to file away into our photo albums and our hearts. With his wife Doreen and 7-year-old son Evan, a huge baseball fan, Lou set out on a tour of Major League Baseball parks across the U.S. and Canada. Along the way, the Desiderio family has been trying to raise money for the Boomer Esiason Foundation, a national children's charity created to find a cure for cystic fibrosis. With the help of the Big Brother/Big Sister organization, the family also brings along a child in each city who might not otherwise get to a game. You can read about and see pictures of their adventures, as well as make a pledge to their cause, at their personal Website. Family fun never sounded so rewarding. Go team Desiderio!



Global Family

Family friendly Websites are a click away with the help of WorldVillage.com. The site's plan is to help families access the best of the Internet. WorldVillage posts a Family Site of the Day and distributes the Family First newsletter, a free email newsletter that features special offers, site reviews, and family oriented editorial content. Members, after joining for free, can visit moderated chat rooms for discussions with like-minded folks about family issues, as well as take advantage of message boards to ask questions and share opinions and ideas.



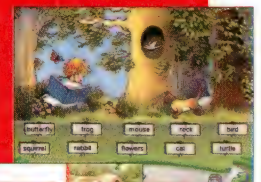
Tech Savvy

If you just bought your first Mac, you might want to pick up a copy of Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms, which has been released in its eighth edition. Novice users, students, and job-seekers will soon consider it a handy addition to their reference book selection. The folks at Webster have gathered more than 4,000 entries — terms and acronyms (do you know what SCSI stands for?) — promising up-to-the-minute information to keep you on top of the ever-changing lingo in our computerized world.

www.idgbooks.com,
800-762-2974

Three Sides to Every Story

Edmark, the folks who brought us the *Thinkin' Things* series, promises to "ignite the curious mind" once again with a new software series called *Stories & More*. Introduced in July, the series will focus on reading and comprehension skills. Intended for use in the classroom, each CD-ROM will help teachers guide children through pre-reading, reading, and post-reading activities, promising to make storybook time more fulfilling.



www.edmark.com, 800-362-2890

Mia 2: Romaine's New Hat

Bypass whoever else is on that superlative ballot for best looking, and check off Mia. Kutoka Interactive is back with *Mia 2: Romaine's New Hat*. The animation throughout the title is stupendous, particularly the introductory sequence, which rivals Pixar and is better than Disney. The story is enjoyable, too. Kids guide Mia, an adorable skateboarding mouse, in her search for sparklies. She needs enough to buy her mother's hat back from the deliciously devilish Romaine the Rat.

The game hosts science-learning activities throughout, and they're just wonderful, including aligning planets, matching species to their habitats, distinguishing elements, and more. But when an activity is over, players aren't allowed to play it again until a new game is started — these activities aren't only educational, they're fun, so kids might not like having the option of playing more than once taken away from them.

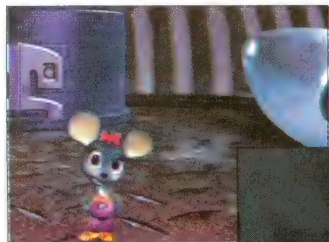
Kids will be drawn to this title because it allows them to freely roam and explore, honing their logical-thinking skills along the way. If they get stumped they just need to

click on Mia's face for a bit of guidance. But this mouse can be stubborn (a couple times she refused to do what I prompted), which may frustrate kids.

The biggest bump in Mia's skateboarding terrain is that the overall adventure doesn't change

with repeated play, which means it's only a matter of time before the kiddies want a new *Mia* title. But for only 20 bucks, its life span doesn't need to be three years. Add up the gorgeous animation and delightful music (Romaine's song is wonderful), the giggles it'll induce (Mia's passenger during a rollicking Jeep ride comments, "Does this thing have airbags?"), and the scientific discoveries kids'll make, and you have an edutainment title that's surely a gem ... I mean, sparklie.

— Carolyn Blackburn



rating

\$20

Kutoka Interactive
Ages 5 - 11
www.kutoka.com

Dinosaur Activity Center

Disney's new *Dinosaur Activity Center* is a good title for young children. Five activities ranging from simple puzzle-making and match-ups to strategy games will keep kids busy for hours. Kids who have seen the movie will quickly identify with the cast of characters who have migrated to this software.

Some of the activities, such as Dinos Puzzle

Maker and Lemur

Love Match, are

pretty easy.

Others, like

Styracosaurus

Spelunker and

Colossal Fossil

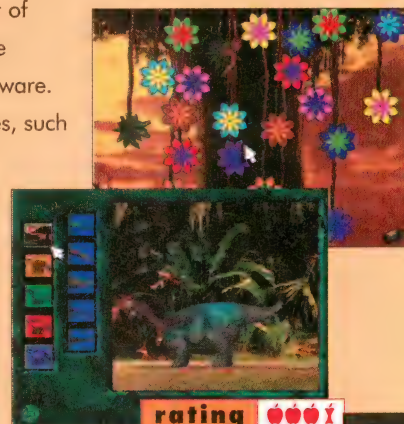
Face Off, are challenging and require considerably more strategy and skill. Increasing levels of difficulty in most of the activities

allow kids to either stay at a level that is comfortable or work up to a greater challenge when they're ready.

The Colossal Fossil Face Off includes a set of Dinosaur Fact Cards that give information on different dinosaurs, albeit limited: only the name and a brief physical description of the dinosaur, a total of two to three sentences per card, is included. In a non-educational title, parents will welcome these prehistoric tidbits of information.

While the directions given by onscreen characters are easy to follow, they are incomplete and you often have to locate the user manual for better instructions, especially if you want to figure out how to win. Also, while the graphics, animations, sound, and music will probably captivate very young children, those who have more experience with game software will find these elements amateurish and uninspiring. *Dinosaur* will keep most kids entertained, at least until Disney whips up something new.

— Cathy Parise



rating

\$30, Disney Interactive
Ages 5 and up
800-228-0988
www.disneyinteractive.com

Golf Personal

Like most Mac users, golf players — even if they're the worst hackers — are fanatics. Mulligan Software's *Golf Personal* ties together the best of two worlds, allowing you to track your handicap and gain a bird's-eye view of your golf game right from your Macintosh.

Golf Personal is a comprehensive program that's designed to help manage the details of your golf game. You begin by creating a player and that player's home golf course. Player information includes name, address, phone number, the player's gender, current handicap, and the type of handicapping method that you want to switch to. (The program ships with about 400 pre-defined golf courses, although none of them were courses that I play.) Fortunately, it's easy to create your own customized courses, including slope, rating, and handicapping information. The program comes with plug-ins for a variety of handicapping methods, including USGA, Callaway System, Scheid System, and Mulligan's proprietary handicapping system.

All updates to these plug-ins are provided for free. The beauty of *Golf Personal* lies in its reporting features. The program produces a number of reports that allow

you to see just how well your golf game is progressing, including reports for

specific courses, combined stats for different courses, and a Ringer report that displays your personal best for every hole at specific courses.

Golf Personal only has two rather minor shortcomings. First, the program provides no means of maintaining information on clubs used and the distances you hit the ball on specific holes, which are features available on most similar Windows programs. Second, while the option of 400 courses sounds like a lot, it's really not. You essentially get eight courses for each state. Mulligan Software would do well to allow users to post new courses to the MulliganSW Website, making the list of pre-defined courses nearly limitless.

If you want to keep track of your golf game, there's no question that *Golf Personal* can more than handle the task. Ease-of-use, excellent record keeping, and a clear view of your golf game make *Golf Personal* a near necessity for any Mac-using golfer.

— Jeff Battersby

Backyard Baseball 2001

Who hasn't dreamed of playing ball with (or better yet, in the shoes of) real-life baseball pros? *Backyard Baseball 2001* allows kids to step into those cleats and play as animated kid versions of 31 real-life baseball players from the Major Leagues, including pitching ace Randy Johnson and slugger Mark McGwire. Or they can choose to play as a Backyard Kid, one of the neighborhood sluggers, with customized voices, appearance, and baseball skills — this is a great feature for the little ladies who want to play in a game that's seemingly for the boys on your block.

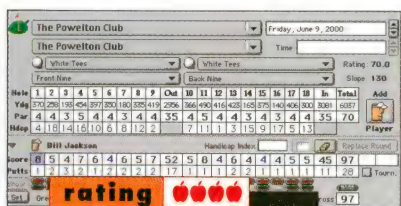
The name of a title like this is re-playability, and there's no doubt kids will run around these bases time and again.

The cartoon-style pitches and at-bats of the players are hilarious, especially for onlooking parents. Kids can choose from pitches like the Big Freeze and the Slo-mo ball (use your imagination). At bat, players can opt

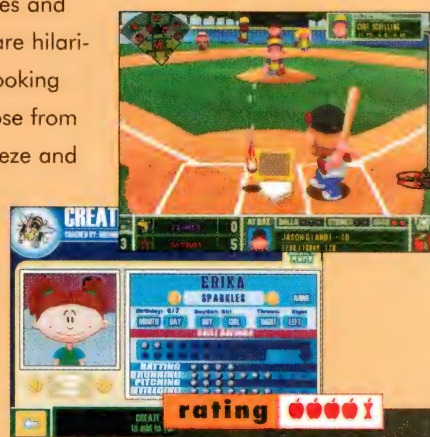
for the Crazy Bunt, or the Under-grounder that digs down and pops up in the outfield. All the while they're treated to wacky commentaries, realistic crowd cheers, and organ music.

Unfortunately, there's one foul ball. An online version is currently available for Windows users only. This secure gaming network allows kids to play one-on-one, real-time games against other kids over the Internet. But Mac kids will get over it because the possibilities are otherwise endless — every game in *Backyard Baseball 2001* is different. Jam-packed with excellent animation and exciting sound effects, this software is a home run hit. You don't need a front-row ticket to the best game in town. Just fire up your Mac and start swinging your mouse. (Hot dogs and peanuts not included.)

— Tina Velgos



\$40
Mulligan Software
www.mulligansw.com



\$20, Humongous Entertainment
Ages 5-12
800-499-8386
www.humongous.com

Triple-A Team

Westlake Interactive Picks Mac Gaming Winners

Mac gamers, look through your collections. Glance around your bedroom, skim your bookshelves. Are you playing *Unreal Tournament*? How about anything from the *Tomb Raider* collection? *Madden NFL 2000*, *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*, *Civilization: Call to Power*?

If the answer is yes, and we're betting it is, then you should know that Westlake Interactive has its fingerprints all over your CD-ROMs.

Meet Westlake

Westlake Interactive is like a movie studio that produces all the titles you want to see. It's the software company responsible for providing just about every major Mac game release in the last two and a half years, from those mentioned above to the upcoming *Scrabble* and — the company's latest and largest coup — *The Sims*. They partner primarily with publishers Aspyr Media and MacSoft.

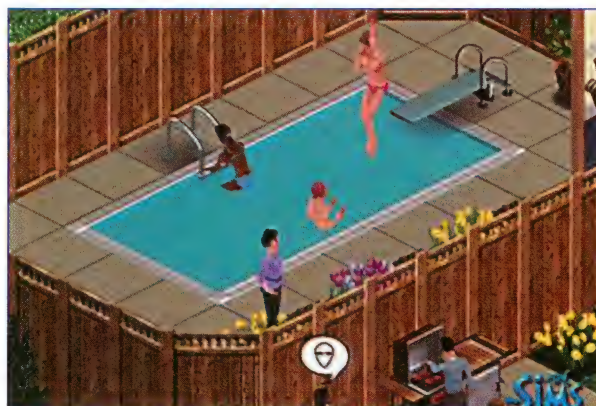
Westlake's mission? To bring the best PC games to the Mac, with no exceptions.

The Austin, Texas-based company is not a game developer in the creative sense. That is, the company doesn't produce original games for the Mac. Instead, Westlake Interactive contracts to port games produced only for the PC — porting essentially means rewriting a game so it will run on a Mac.

The company's philosophy, says president and co-founder Mark Adams, is to go for the biggest and best. "Our original mission goal and statement was that we wanted to get the cream-of-the-crop games from Windows and PC and bring them over to the Mac," Adams says. "That's still what we aim to do."

Westlake Interactive was founded in 1997 at a fairly low point in Apple history when, Adams says, "death of Apple" stories were more common than speculation about the future of Mac gaming.

Still, he says, he and his budding staff — which includes his wife, secretary and treasurer Suellen Adams — were longtime Apple supporters with "somewhat of a



The Sims

feeling that the market wasn't going to go away.

"Lion Entertainment — which had done conversions like *Quake* and *Duke Nukem 3D* — had just folded, and we saw that there wasn't any company left that was focusing on just bringing the top games to the Mac," he says.

So Adams recruited Ken Cobb and Phil Sulak from Lion and the group promptly went to work, landing updates and ports for *X-Men: Ravages of the Apocalypse*, *Unreal*, *Shadow Warrior*, and *Falcon 4.0* within months. Since then, every time fans start clamoring for the conversion of a hot PC title to the Mac, Westlake Interactive has been the company to beat. They shipped 12 titles in 1999, with an average staff of five programmers.

"They are committed to the platform, understand the industry, and simply do the best work in the world when it comes to conversions," says Jeff Baietto, marketing director at Aspyr Media (publisher of the upcoming *Deus Ex*). "As a company, they are responsible for something like 25 titles in the last two years. They are Mac converting machines."

By Molly Wood

"I think the biggest thing is experience," Adams says of Westlake's success in landing red-hot titles. "Even before we started the company, 12 to 15 games had already been done for the Mac by our developers (Sulak and Cobb). We could go to the publishers and say we've done (top) titles before, and we want to do them now."

Tech Specs

Westlake has been successful in large part because the company has managed to make games created for the PC look entirely like Mac games. Westlake tackles tricky, graphics-intensive projects like *Tomb Raider* and *Madden 2000*, and the games invariably come out bug-free and beautiful. It's that reputation, Adams hopes, that keeps publishers coming back with their triple-A titles.

"It's a hard thing — we've seen other companies and individuals get overwhelmed by it," he says. "There are so many things you have to deal with — how the sound works, how the graphics are drawn, dealing with the Mac OS. There's just hundreds of little details."

Plus, the folks at Westlake just plain like working on Macs.

"From a technical, personal perspective, we really enjoy programming and working with Macs," he says. "It's a well-designed system, nice to program for since Apple controls both the hardware and the software. There are not many different kinds of configurations, which might result in the game running fine on one machine and not on another."

Market Share

Mac people are notoriously vocal, and many of them want their games now, with none of this "waiting for the port" business. A good port of a popular game can take as long as six months, and that's a pretty efficient clip. With this timeframe, Westlake desires to stick with games that are known successes. This philosophy is one that often frustrates Mac gamers, and even publishers.

"On one side, Apple and our publishers really want to have simultaneous publishing," Adams says. "That's a very difficult thing to do technically, but

more so, you don't know if a game's going to be a big hit until a few months have passed. If you bet on it, you've wasted a lot of time and maybe ported a game that isn't that good."

Despite the frustration inherent in such a business strategy, Adams says it's worth it to be cautious as long as the Mac games market is still a little risky. That's also the reasoning for pursuing big-ticket, so-called A-list games.

"Big titles equal big sales, that is the theory anyway," Baietto says. "Titles like *Deus Ex* and *Tomb Raider* are not only huge names, but great games."

"We want to look at our list of titles and know that everybody instantly recognizes them," Adams says.

Direct Hit

Don't get the idea that Adams is pessimistic about the Mac games market. Rather, he's waiting for a game to take off and push the market in the direction it's meant to go.

"We haven't seen any of the games we've done in the last year and a half really take off relative to the fact that Apple has sold 3 or 4 million iMacs," he says. "We haven't seen a game just skyrocket."

Adams and publishers agree that a game — one that will hit a good percentage of those iMac users and just take off — is out there, and will rejuvenate the market. Early bets are on *The Sims*, but Adams says he's seen others try and fail.

"We kind of thought *Madden 2000* might do that, but it did pretty well, not quite what we hoped," he said. "Had we really tapped the market, it might have sold three or four times as many copies."

The Sims, the season's hottest and most highly anticipated Mac release, has shown early signs of being the kind of game that could push the Mac market into the stratosphere. Adams says it could just as easily be something as innocuous as *Scrabble*. "Hopefully," he



says, "the Mac market will snowball from there."

"If you get that one game that sells, that gets people ordering on the Websites, maybe it will cause retailers to

Check It Out!

For Mac gaming information galore, Apple's Website has the latest in news, as well as features, and QuickTime Teasers ...

www.apple.com/games

order more, and then people would buy more," he says. "Especially iMac people who don't realize yet that they might enjoy playing a game — when they get something and say, 'This is really cool,' we'll see the sales really start rising."

Up, Up, and Away

As the big-ticket publisher of big-ticket games on big-ticket machines, Adams says he knows that he and Westlake are in an enviable position.

"The most promising thing is the fact that Apple is selling tons and tons and tons of machines, and they're great machines," he says. "The DV iMacs are an incredible gaming platform, and they're really well-suited to our games."

"It's certainly much easier to be in a position where we have to figure out how to sell to all these people, instead of figuring out how to make a living selling to only a few," he says. **MHJ**

We've Got You Surrounded

By Carolyn Blackburn

My Dad is big on quality home entertainment

equipment — watching a movie like, say, *The Matrix*, at my parents' house is just about as good as being in the theater. Dad thinks it's better, attributing the quality of the experience to stellar sound. Polk Audio has five new multimedia systems ranging in price from \$60 to \$170. If you're sick of tinny, shallow, just-plain-old-not-good sound, it might be time for some new speakers. The folks at Polk want your computing experience — from Internet surfing to gameplay — to be better. Their AMR (Active Media Reference) line pulls out all the stops, including two surround-sound systems. Imagine being caught up in the visual excitement of your favorite action game, all the while being enveloped by its sound — I know my Dad would give two thumbs up, way up, to a Mac with this kind of sound boost.

www.polkaudio.com,
800-377-7655

Kubrick, Allen, Fellini ... You!

So, you wanna be in pictures, or try your hand at making one? If you've got a great movie idea (but not a lot of Hollywood cash), you should know about ResFest. The winners have already been selected for this year's tour, which will travel to a town near you starting in San Francisco on September 7. Entries for the festival can be shot in any format — film, video, CGI, etc. — but must make use of computer editing and/or effects software. This traveling film fest includes panel discussions, hands-on technology presentations, and parties. In the meantime, visit the ResFest

site to view QuickTime clips of movies from festivals past.
www.resfest.com, 415-437-2686



SOS

Legacy Interactive, promoters of "real life games," will ship *ER Code Blue* in October. This medical simulation game, Legacy's eighth, puts players in scrubs and challenges them to make decisions doctors might have to make in an actual emergency room. The CD-ROM will include 35 critical medical cases, followed by online downloads. George Clooney, step aside (oh, he already has!) — now it's our turn to take someone's life into our hands.
www.legacyinteractive.com, 410-568-3636

Arcade Action

Talk about taking me back. Among the six new titles MacSoft (teamed up with Hasbro Interactive) revealed at Macworld in July are *Centipede* and *Pong*. I can hardly contain myself! In *Centipede*, you play Wally the Wee person, who must defend a village against not only centipedes, but also fleas, ants, scorpions, and the like. And *Pong* — need I say more? Okay — 20 levels of play, fully functioning paddles that catch, throw, and spin the ball, and 3D animation keeps this



forefather of computer games up to date. If these two classics don't get your heart racing, maybe *Vampire: The Masquerade* will. Or *Beach Head 2000*, which promises to "recreate the drama of military conflicts like never before" (think *Saving Private Ryan*). Or ... oh, never mind. I'm sure I've gotten you into enough of a tizzy.

www.wizardworks.com/macsoft, 800-229-2714

Sold

Bungie, onetime Mac-only game developer, was bought by Microsoft in late June. The company and its brethren will pick up and move from Chicago to the



Seattle area, where they will work under the name Bungie Studios within Microsoft's Games division. Bungie's team is enthusiastic about the opportunity to develop content for the Xbox console system, and assures that Microsoft has blessed them with creative freedom. But what about the future of Mac-platform games? Fans will have to wait and hope.

www.bungie.com

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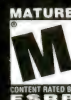


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Animated Blood
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Traitors Gate

In each market, game developers must battle against a plethora of other titles. *Traitors Gate* rises to the challenge. It's a stable, proven genre of adventure that has incorporated a particularly well thought out story.

The gamer plays the part of Raven, whose background is somewhat uncertain, but suffice it to say that you're a cross between

James Bond, *Mission Impossible's* Ethan Hunt, and a Navy Seal. The American government suspects that a mutinous government agent plans to steal the British Crown Jewels.

Consequently, your mission is to steal the Jewels from the Tower of London before the mutineer gets a chance.

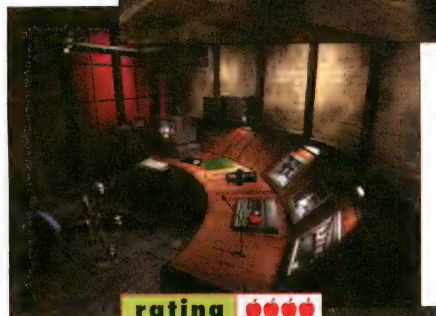
Perhaps the most intriguing part of the game is the fact that the Tower of London is completely mapped in detail, all of the way down to its exhibits and tourist markers. So whether it's intentional or not, the game is

somewhat educational (always a plus). While the game is presented in the first-person environment, it's important to note that you are not free to walk wherever you want. Because the player is forced to follow a pre-determined path through any given room, the game loses a sense of freedom. To its credit, however, there are more than 1,200 possible ways to complete the mission, which certainly boosts the game's re-playability.

It should be noted that I experienced a few minor bugs as I played *Traitors Gate*, but nothing that rendered it unplayable. I was also disappointed with the ending of this game, which was surprisingly short, trite, and completely lacking of any spectacle.

It's been quite a while since an adventure of this nature has genuinely held my interest. Thanks to the great story and concept behind *Traitors Gate*, however, I found myself plugging away well into the wee hours of the morning. Given the \$20 price tag, it's a great buy — *Traitors Gate* will serve you well.

— Rafi Guroian



rating 

\$20

DreamCatcher

888-611-9999

www.dreamcatchergames.com

Bingo Bingo Bingo

Bingo Bingo Bingo is another one of those games that you're either going to embrace or poo-poo, defend or ridicule. It's joined the ranks of classic board games that have crossed over into CD-ROM format. If you've never liked or even played bingo, don't bother. But if you're a long-time fan of the classic game, this title, with over 100 bingo variations, will likely keep you content.

You can play up to six cards simultaneously, by yourself or against up to 100 other computer bingo players. When I played against 50, I was *this* close to winning each time. (Lose bingo enough and one's confidence wavers.) The game offers an Options page that will make hardcore players either cringe or jump for joy. You can toggle in and out of automatically marking called numbers, for example — you don't get to do that when you're playing on paper.



MacSoft

\$20

800-229-2714

www.wizardworks.com/macsoft

Players might feel more in control away from the computer screen, playing the old-fashioned way — simply print out cards, find your favorite magic marker, and get ready for the computer's rapid-fire succession of number calling. Playing on the computer might cause frustration, as players may lose points on a perfect bingo card if they don't move their mouse quickly enough to hit the Bingo button before the next number is called. (Give me a second!)

Because you can print out cards and play with your Mac as caller, this game ensures the satisfaction of players who miss the camaraderie of bingo night in a hall, minus the fold-up tables and those bean bag ashtrays. For \$20, it's a good gift idea for anyone who collects get-together games. Set up your Mac at the next party you throw, and after a round of Taboo, print out some cards and unfurl *Bingo* on your guests. That is, if you know a roomful of bingo fans.

— Carolyn Blackburn

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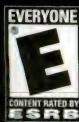
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Clan Lord

Clan Lord is a rare breed of computer game that survives on its own ingenuity rather than flashy graphics or clichéd gameplay. The world of *Clan Lord* is full of fantastic creatures, enigmatic magic, and infinite mystery — it's a place where thousands of players come together online with a spirit of camaraderie rarely found on the Internet. To the uninitiated, *Clan Lord* will look rather antiquated. There's no eye candy here, just good old-fashioned 2D graphics. *Clan Lord's* landscape is intriguing and deep, rather than visually original. With each passing update (the game itself is upgraded every two weeks) comes new areas to explore, new plots to uncover, and occasion-

ally, more information on the mysterious back-story of the game. It's terribly easy to get sucked in and lose track of time in real life.

Technically, *Clan Lord* could be called a "Massively Multiplayer Persistent Real Time Role Playing

Game." Players choose their character from a number of Tolkien-esque races (Elves, Dwarves, Cat People, etc.), and then choose a job (Warrior, Healer, or Magic-User). Once chosen, characters are set loose on a gigantic world filled with monsters to hunt, towns to visit, and teachers to learn from.

A day in the life of a *Clan Lord* character might include a group hunt for feral dogs in the forests outside Puddleby, exploration of new lands discovered on a neighboring island, adventures into the dark hives of the evil Ant Queen, and studying a new language in the local library. There's lots to see and do, and you'll be utterly shocked by *Clan Lord's* family spirit — experienced players are always ready to help beginners and those in need. This is the perfect game for anyone who wants to get into online role playing but is afraid of being alienated by hardcore geeks.



rating 
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F/A-18 Korea Gold

It's hard to resist a bargain. For example — what happens when you put a couple of true classics together for one low price?

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This is one of the hottest flight-sim packages to come diving out of the sun in many a year. Not only do you get the acclaimed *F/A-18 Korea 1.1*, but you also get its precursor, the prize-winning *F/A-18 Hornet*



rating 

3.1, twice named the Best Simulation Game of the Year in *MacHome's* annual Reader's Choice Awards.

And you'll do plenty of flying. *Hornet 3.1* puts you in the Gulf War, with 28 Kuwaiti missions against Saddam Hussein's jet jockeys, while *Korea 1.1* ships you to the far side of the world where you'll get another 28 missions to stop North Korean troops.

The air sorties and ground strikes are easy on the eyes, too. You'll marvel over searing Kuwaiti deserts and Korea's rolling 3D terrain, with such excellent atmospheric effects as sun glare, haze, cloud cover, smoke, and explosions. To improve the visuals further, the gold version supports all Voodoo, Rage, or OpenGL compliant 3D accelerators. This set also provides native Internet multiplayer capability.

Is there a downside? You bet. These sims are tough to master, especially for beginners. The learning curve is steep. To be successful, you must not only train yourself to fly the F/A-18, but also to handle its complex instrumentation and weaponry. And that ain't easy.

Okay, so it's frustrating. But you'd be smart to grab a package before they all fly off the shelves.

— John Lee

\$20, Graphic Simulations
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— Alex Handy



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Internet File Suffixes

The Cryptic Endings to Files

The textual interface of early operating systems made it difficult to tell one type of file from another. To overcome this problem, files were given a three-letter suffix to identify their type. Although this practice waned in importance with the development of graphical user interfaces with descriptive icons, it regained its utility with the advent of the Internet.

Compression/Archives

Files that end with .sit are StuffIt archives created by Aladdin's StuffIt compression applications. They can easily be expanded by the latest version of StuffIt Expander, available at www.aladdinsys.com.

Items that have .sea at the end of the file name are StuffIt self-expanding archives. These files, created by one of Aladdin's StuffIt compression applications, include a built-in decompressor. Although this adds somewhat to the size of the archive, you can decompress them simply by double-clicking the file icon.

File names that terminate with .zip are Zip archives. Zip

is a compression standard that was popularized on the Microsoft Windows platform, but has recently migrated to the Mac OS.

Thankfully, you do not need a dedicated Zip application to crack open these files. Simply drag the archive to StuffIt Expander and it will decompress the file without a hitch.

Items that end with .hqx are BinHex-encoded files. To transfer files over the Net, data is sometimes converted to a textual format to increase the reliability of the transfer. BinHex-encoded files tend to be larger than MacBinary files (see below), however, and can take longer to transfer. You can also decode these files using StuffIt Expander.

Items that have the suffix .bin are MacBinary-encoded files, and are yet another file type that you can decode using StuffIt Expander. Unlike BinHex files, MacBinary files retain their pure binary code and are somewhat smaller, lessening download times. If you have a choice, of course, always opt for downloading the smaller file.

Graphics

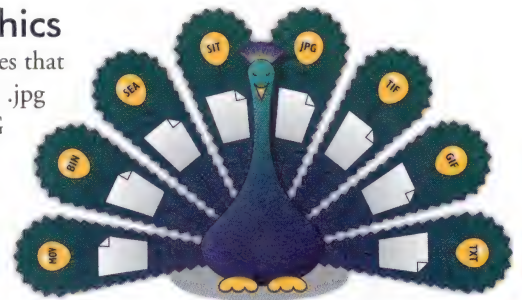
File names that end with .jpg are JPEG image files.

Photos stored in the JPEG for-

mat are frequently a fraction of the size of the original image file, while retaining most of the image quality. You can view JPEGs with a browser or many other types of applications, including Apple's convenient PictureViewer, which comes free along with the QuickTime download.

Items that have .gif at the end of the file name are images stored with the Graphic Interchange Format (GIF). These images reduce the overall size of an image by forcing an 8-bit palette. Instead of storing full-color information, GIF images choose the 256 colors (or less, if possible) that best represent the image at hand. Unlike JPEG images, GIF images can be animated. As with JPEGs, you can view GIFs with browsers and many other applications.

Files that include the suffix .tif are images stored in the Tag Image File Format (TIFF). The format was developed by a committee in 1986 in an effort to determine a standard for high-quality digital images. TIFF images are commonly used in publishing, and since they are uncompressed, they tend to be very large. TIFF images can be viewed with many applications, including Apple's convenient PictureViewer and Adobe Photoshop. **MHJ**



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Flickering Screens, Video Cards, and File Formats

Q I have an iMac DV SE. My picture has just recently started to flicker and change color. For instance, the whole desktop pattern is usually shades of orange and the screen flickers to a dull brownish green. This will change back and fluctuate between good color/bad color. It starts to happen about 30 minutes after being turned on. Help!

— Gere Reed

A I'm afraid you'll have to pack up your iMac and head to a nearby service provider. The problem you describe is most likely a flaw in your iMac's analog board — the circuitry that is responsible for routing the desktop image to your display. Since it doesn't occur when the computer is first powered on, it may be related to the buildup of heat within the machine. An Apple Authorized Service Provider can properly diagnose the problem and replace the analog board if need be. Although it may be painful to part with your new iMac, it's likely far better than enduring the color shifting.

By Chris McVeigh

Q I own a Power Macintosh G4 with a DVD-ROM. I would like to connect it to a television monitor by S-Video. The computer has an ATI Rage 128 graphics card that does not have a video-out port (except for the monitor). After some research and discussion with ATI support, it was recommended that I install an Xclaim VR 128 card. The catch is that the

DVD Player requires the original Rage 128 card to function, and I will only be able to play the DVD on a display connected to that card. Is there any way to get around this without reconfiguring my computer, which will probably not be worth the time and money?

— Jeffrey Frost

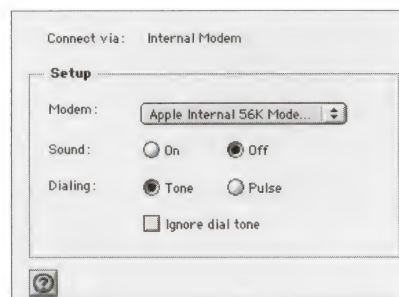
A Actually, Jeffrey, an Xclaim VR card would be a very poor choice for your needs. The inability to output certain types of video that depend on your existing ATI Rage 128 card, such as DVD movies and 3D-accelerated games, means that the Xclaim VR would have very limited functionality at best.

Thankfully, there are several other solutions available to you. Products like the iAverKey DV (\$99, AVerMedia, www.aver.com) and the i-TVView DV (\$139, FOCUS Enhancements, www.focusinfo.com) convert your screen image for display on television. Both products support S-Video output, too, so you can get the best possible image on your television. (Keep in mind, though, that a television has a limited resolution, so small text will be blurry and illegible at higher resolutions.) This solution allows you to output anything to your television, from movies to games and business presentations. The only caveat with both these products is that you must disconnect your monitor and use the television as the principal display (unless, of course, you have an iMac DV or PowerBook with video-mirroring capabilities).

Q Can you please tell me how to turn off the modem noise. I am running Mac OS 9, and the connection noises are driving me crazy.

— Matt Kilroy

A One of the most annoying things about connecting to the Internet is the tortured, garbled screech of your modem. Whether you're speaking to a friend on the phone or enjoying a nice cup of tea, the modem's high-pitch squeal will soon begin grating your nerves.



Thankfully, it can be easily turned off. Open your Modem control panel and click the Sound "Off" option to give yourself some peace and quiet.

Q I just bought an Olympus D-340R digital camera. My old Macintosh Performa 550 cannot support its software, however, so I rely on my son's PC to extract the images from the camera. He stores the images on a floppy disk, but when I open one of the stored files, all I get is garbled text. I've tried opening the images with ClarisWorks, WordPerfect, and even Netscape. No luck. And yet I

sent a picture to myself via email, and it appeared without a problem! Why is it that I can't open the photos directly from a floppy?

— John C. Nowicki

A Your Macintosh appears to be having difficulty recognizing the format of the files your son stores to the floppy disk. Since it has no idea what type of file it is dealing with, it attempts to open the file as text, and you are pre-

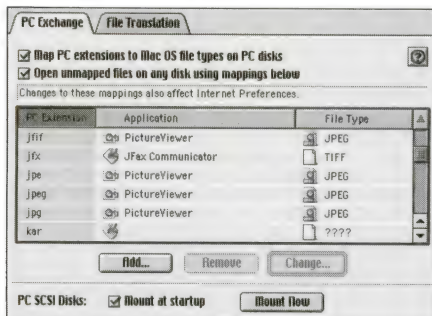
8.6. It includes the necessary File Exchange control panel and the PictureViewer application. Mac OS 8.6 may be hard to locate now that it has been superseded by Mac OS 9, so you may have to seek out a local Macintosh User's Group for help. Unfortunately, since your Performa 550 doesn't use a PowerPC processor, it cannot be upgraded to Mac OS 9.

Q I downloaded Internet Explorer 5 and found that after I launched it, there were eight new files in the trash. I can't figure out how they got in there, except maybe from the download. The files include: MS configuration Lib PPC, MS Container Lib PPC, MS Internal LibraryPPC, MS Preferences Library PPC, MS J Script, MS Variant Library, MS Favorites Lib, and Courier New. Should these files be trashed? What should I do? I don't want to mess anything up!

— Ed Simonds

A Internet Explorer 5 runs a special application called Microsoft

Internet First Run the first time it is installed, in order to place important software components within the System Folder. The First Run application also removes any outdated components that may have been placed there by earlier versions of Internet Explorer. These unneeded files are transferred to the trash, where it appears you have stumbled upon them. Have no fear, Ed. Those items have been tossed in the trash purposely, and aren't required by Internet Explorer 5. **MHJ**



sented with the textual coding of your photo. There are a few things you can do to ensure that your photo files are always opened correctly.

The first thing you must ensure is that your son saves the files with names that end in ".jpg." This addition to the file name helps the Macintosh recognize the file type. The next thing you'll want to do is check to see if you have either PC Exchange or File Exchange in your set of control panels. Now, since you did not mention what version of the Mac OS you are using, it's difficult to determine whether or not that control panel is installed. (You note that you have a Performa 550, so I'm guessing you have a version of System 7 that did not include PC Exchange.)

Your final task is to get your hands on a photo-viewing application, such as Apple's free PictureViewer, a program that has been included with both QuickTime 3 and 4. Applications such as ClarisWorks and WordPerfect are not designed to view photos. To ensure that the files are opened properly, simply drag the photo file onto the PictureViewer application icon.

Should you determine you are missing some key software, your best option may be to upgrade your Performa to Mac OS

have questions?

Got a Mac problem that's driving you nuts? Let us take a crack at it. We'll answer questions of general interest to all readers. All mail is assumed intended for publication, and we reserve the right to edit questions for brevity and clarity. When sending your questions, include your full name and phone number. Send your questions to:

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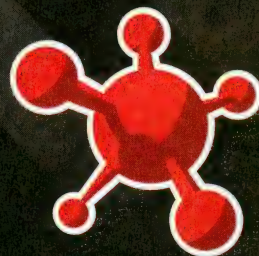
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MAC OS X READY

Guard Your Privacy with IE 5

There's no doubt that Internet Explorer 5 sets a new standard for Macintosh Web browsers. Still, it does have a few quirks you should be aware of, particularly if you use your Mac in a busy environment. By default, Internet Explorer collects and stores the addresses of the last 300 pages you have visited in its History panel. As long as access to your computer is unrestricted, a curious person can launch Internet Explorer, click on the History tab and then examine the trail of sites you have visited in the past few days. This can be frustrating, for example, if you have bought an anniversary present for your husband at an online retailer and he stumbles upon the receipt. It can also be embarrassing if you've been seeking additional information on a personal health issue. It may even be damaging if one of the pages has a form that still contains your credit card number.

Thankfully, you can limit or even turn off the History feature. Launch Internet Explorer and select Preferences from the Edit menu. The Preferences window appears, and you'll notice a list of options to the left. Click on the item called Advanced. Several options will appear to the right. At the top, you'll see a box marked History. You can reduce the number of remembered sites by entering a smaller number in the space where it says, "Remember the last ____ places visited." To turn the feature off completely, enter 0. You can also get rid of all currently stored page addresses by clicking the Clear History button at the right.

You might find the History feature to be very convenient, however. Turning it off entirely may not be a wise solution

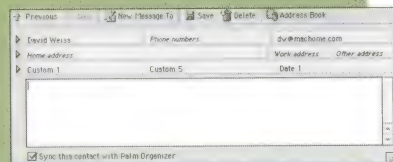
By Chris McVeigh

Build an Outlook Express Address Book

You can add contacts to your Outlook Express Address Book quickly and easily if you've already received an email message

from that person. Let's say Jenny Doe (jennyydoe@machome.com) has sent you a message and it is still sitting in your In Box. Click once on the message and then select Add to Address Book from the Tools menu. This will instantly place Jenny's name and email address in a contact form. Now, if you'd like to add phone numbers and addresses, you'll select Address Book from the Windows menu, double-click the new entry, and fill in the extra information yourself. Most users will be content with a simple name and email address, however.

Once you've added a few people to your address book, click once on the New button in the upper left corner. You no longer need to type the receiver's full address. In fact, you can just type the first few letters of their name. Immediately below the recipient box, you'll be presented with a list of matching addresses, with the most likely match highlighted in blue. Click on the correct address, press tab, and you're ready to write your message.



iMac Got You Looking Down?

Although the iMac is very easy on the eyes, it can be a real pain in the neck. Most users will find themselves tilting their heads down to stare at the display, or raising their hands higher than normal to reach the keyboard. Over time, this can cause muscular discomfort. Thankfully, there are now two great new products on the market to help you raise your iMac to eye level. The Uniriser (\$30, Contour Designs, www.contourdesign.com) matches the styling of the Apple Studio Display's legs and includes a convenient shelf for USB accessories. The more robust Cozo Stand (\$60, Cozo, www.cozo.com) features thick, sturdy legs similar to the Apple Studio Display, and also integrates a tilt-and-swivel base to allow full rotation of your iMac.

share your tips...

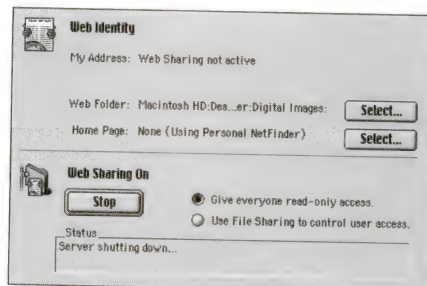
Got some tips you'd like to share with your fellow MacHome readers? Please send them to us at: **chris@machome.com**

All mail is assumed intended for publication, and we reserve the right to edit tips for brevity and clarity. When sending your tips, please make sure to include your full name.

for you. In this case, you can opt to open the History panel and remove the entries for any sensitive sites. Click on the History tab to expand the panel. Now, command-click an undesirable item. A contextual menu pops up. Simply select Delete from the menu, and the item will disappear without a trace.

Share Digital Images Online

Although Apple's iTools provides a polished interface and dedicated URL, the quickest and easiest way to share your photos online is actually via the Mac OS's Web Sharing control panel. Create a folder on your desktop and call it "Digital Images." Now, drag your collection of photos into the folder. The photos can even be organized in subfolders, if you like. Please note that you should only use images that are in either the JPEG or GIF format, since they will be viewed within the Web browser window. Now open the Web Sharing control panel and click the first Select button at the right to choose your Web folder — the folder, of course, that you just created on your desktop and stored your photos in. Another window will immediately open, asking you to select a home page. Click None in the bottom left. Now click the Start button at the bottom left. You will be automatically connected to the Internet, if you are not already. Now, select Copy My Address from the Edit menu and choose the all-number address.



You're now ready to share your photos with your friends online. You can log onto a

chat service such as AOL Instant Messenger or ICQ and simply paste the number address in the test window. You can also send an email message to your friend containing the number address. Tell your friends to copy and paste the address into their Web browsers and press return. They'll be whisked to a very bare-bones Website, located right on your hard drive, containing a list of your pictures (or folders containing your pictures). To view a picture, they need only click on it once. It then will be automatically loaded into their browser window.

The only caveat to using Web Sharing to show off photos of your family vacation is that the number address will likely change each time you log on, unless you happen to have a DSL or cable connection.

Mac OS Update Watch

AirPort 1.2

This latest update now supports closed networks, meaning that someone with a nearby AirPort-enabled Macintosh cannot locate or log into your network without knowing the exact server name. The update can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11570>.

USB Printer Sharing

Apple has released USB Printer Sharing software to allow Macintosh users to share USB printers over both Ethernet and AirPort networks. The update requires Mac OS 9 and can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11728>.

AppleWorks 6.0.4 Updater

This latest update to Apple's multifaceted software suite improves performance and increases stability. Several bugs have been addressed, including an issue with AppleWorks 6.0.3 and Dataviz translators. The update can be downloaded from <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11721>.



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Bright, Bold, and Flat

The Inner Workings of Liquid Crystal Displays

The bulky excess of the cathode ray tube has always hampered the industrial design of computer equipment. It's large, unruly, and demands far too much space. This has led the impetus to uncouple flat-panel displays from laptops and place them on our desktops.

A Molecular Sandwich

A liquid crystal display consists of a thin layer of liquid crystalline material between two layers of glass. Unlike a traditional monitor, which creates points of light with an electron gun, LCDs filter and color pure white light to form each "pixel." A fluorescent tube provides backlighting via an electroluminescent panel beneath the display.

liquid crystal molecules flow freely, but as with a solid, they tend to face the same direction. The orientation of these molecules, controlled with the application of an electrical current, determines the transparency of the crystalline material.

A matrix of transparent electrodes in the display controls the orientation of the liquid crystal molecules in each pixel, determining the intensity of light allowed through. At one extreme, the molecules allow light to pass directly through, creating a white pixel; at the other, the molecules stop all light from passing through, leaving a black pixel.

Each pixel is actually made up of three color-filtered subpixels — one red, one green, and one blue — each controlled by its own transistor. Altering the electrical current to the transistor minutely changes the orientation of the crystal molecules and allows the subpixel to display one of 256 intensities of its color. When viewed from a comfortable distance, the three subpixels optically blend together to form one of 16.7 million colors ($256 \times 256 \times 256 = 16,777,216$).

Smudges on the Window

Despite many recent innovations, production of liquid crystal displays remains an imperfect process. You may have seen a display on which several pixels seem to be continuously lit. Modern displays can contain over 2.35 million transistors, and occasionally, a small number of them malfunction, get-

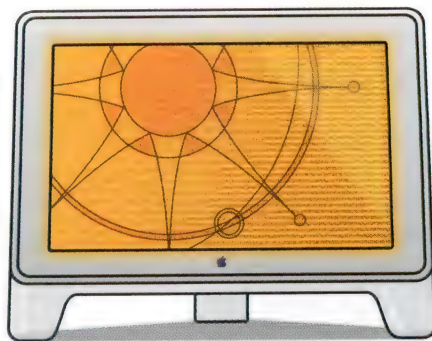
ting stuck either on or off. As a result, many manufacturers tolerate several pixel failures per display, depending upon their number, location, and proximity to each other.

Color accuracy also remains a significant issue with liquid crystal displays. The technology has somewhat limited the gamut of colors that can be properly displayed, and unfortunately, images viewed on a color-calibrated monitor often vary noticeably from images viewed on an LCD.

Liquid crystal displays also tend to vary in contrast from top to bottom, depending upon the angle that it is viewed. From approximately one foot away, the top of the display tends to appear darker and more saturated, while the bottom appears lighter and somewhat washed out. This is normal, but it further impedes color accuracy for graphic designers and can be distracting to the user.

Not Today. Maybe Tomorrow.

Despite its shortcomings, liquid crystal technology continues to improve. Apple's 22" Cinema Display features very bright backlighting, minimal color variance, and an expanded viewing range. The caveat, of course, is that it currently retails for \$3,500. Although the price will surely fall with time, a large, pristine liquid crystal display remains prohibitively expensive for most of us. **MWJ**



By Chris McVeigh

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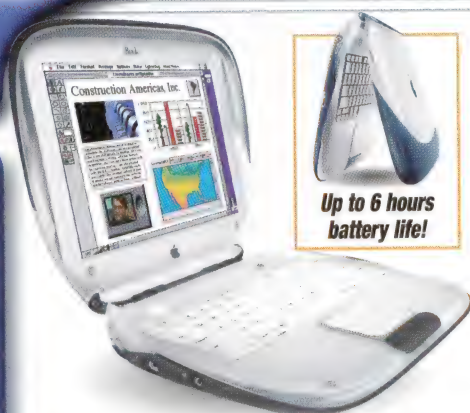
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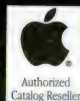
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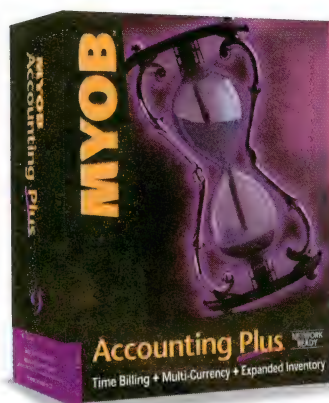
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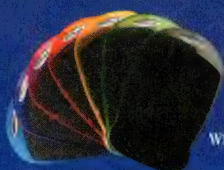
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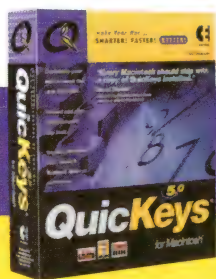


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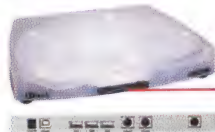
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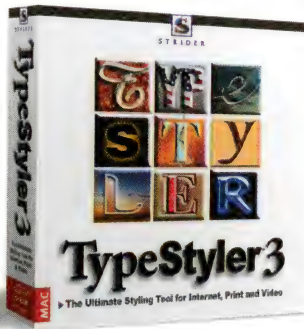
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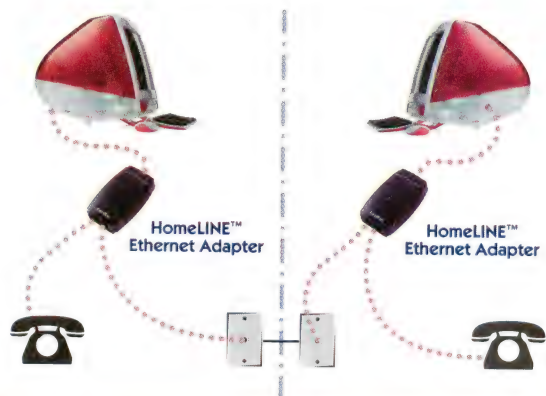
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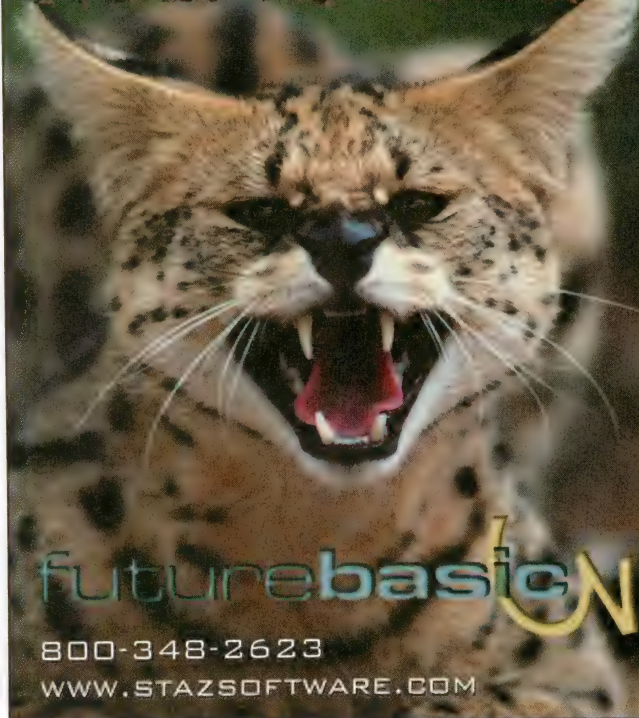
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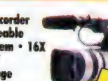
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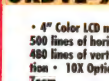


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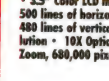
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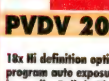
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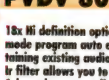
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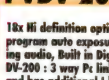


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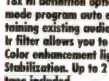
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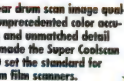
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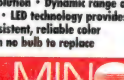
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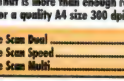


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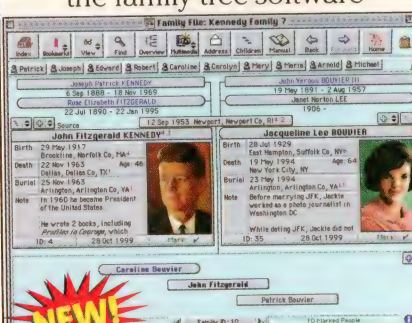
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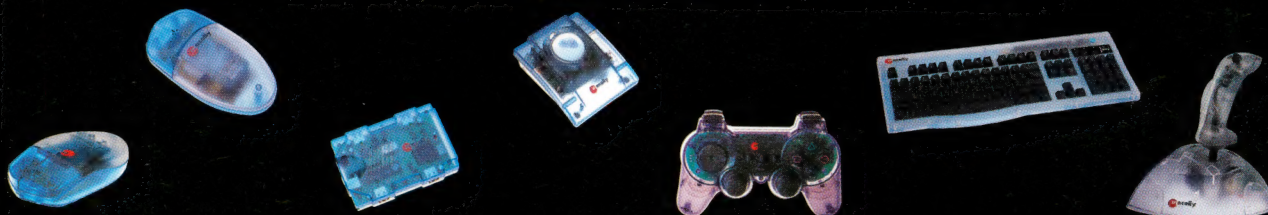
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SMART SHOPPER

Make Your Own Letterhead

Here's a kind of letterhead that's simple to make, and yet it can also be quite unique. It uses one single letter as a watermark image, and this will give all of your letters a distinctive look.

Materials

- 1 Mac
- 1 Printer
- 1 Word-processing application
- A dash of whimsy

Skill Level

Beginners on up

You can create and print copies to use every day for your personal correspondence, or use the watermark image as a document template. Another idea is to print up 15 or 20 sheets on good-quality paper, add a bundle of matching envelopes, and tie it with ribbon for a wonderful personalized gift.

I'll show you how to create the letterhead using Microsoft Word 98, but you can easily achieve a similar result using AppleWorks.

Begin with a new document by selecting the New button on the Standard toolbar. I'll refer to the letter of the alphabet you'll use as the "initial letter." In order for your

initial letter to appear as a watermark on your page, you'll work in Word's Page Header mode, so choose Header and Footer from the View menu to move into that mode.

Create a text box for your initial letter by choosing Text Box from the Insert menu and dragging a large text box onto the screen below the header area. You'll want it to take up about a quarter of the page area. Don't worry that the text box has a line around it — you'll remove it shortly.

Click inside the text box and type the initial letter — you might want to use the first letter of either your first name or your last name. Select the letter and choose Font from the Format menu to display the Font dialog box. Scroll through the font list to find one you like. The Preview window will show you what the letter will look like.

Of course, it's best to choose a font that matches your personality or that of the person you're creating the letterhead for. You might also want to experiment with the Shadow, Emboss, Outline, and Engrave checkboxes to see if they enhance your choice. Set the color of the letter to a pale gray (Gray — 25%) from the Font Color dropdown

list. Type the number 400 in the Size box to make the letter very large, and click OK.

You should now see your text box on the screen with your initial letter inside it. If the text box isn't big enough, click and drag on its sizing handles to make it larger, and move it into position so that it's centered on the page. (Don't worry if the actual text box is a bit off-center.)

Remove the border from the text box by selecting it and choosing Text Box from the Format menu, and then clicking on the Colors and Lines tab. From the Line Color dropdown list, select No Line and, still in the Format Text Box dialog, choose the Wrapping tab. Select None from among the Wrapping Style options and then click OK to confirm your settings.

Choose Close from the Header and Footer toolbar to return to your document. Save your letterhead and print it. If you prefer, save the file as a template using Save As from the File menu, and choose Document Template from the "Save File as Type" list. You can now use the

did you know?

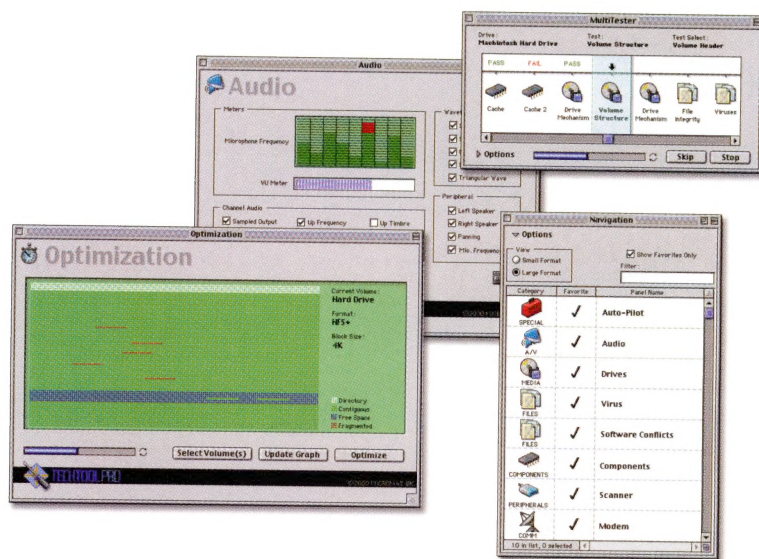
Fonts are measured in "points." 72 points = 1 inch, so 400 points is about 5.5 inches tall.

template as you would any other template, by choosing New from the File menu and choosing your template's name from the New dialog box.

Other Ideas

- If you have a color printer, try a pale color instead of gray.
- If you have a laser printer, try a flecked or colored paper.
- Try using a graphic instead of a letter. Place your image inside the text box by choosing Insert, Picture, Clip Art. Select the clip art and, from the Picture toolbar's Image Control list, choose Watermark. **MHJ**

There's only one utility in the world that does more for your Macintosh than TechTool Pro 2...



...Introducing TechTool Pro 3

MicroMat's disk repair and Macintosh troubleshooting utility just became a whole lot better. Besides repairing drives, recovering data and checking the health of your Macintosh components, TechTool Pro 3 can now help protect you against virus problems and software conflicts. Version 3 also sports a new modern interface. But the real power of TechTool Pro 3 isn't in the features you can see, it's in the features you can't see. Like a multitude

of new drive repair routines that can save data that other utilities would simply abandon. An improved recovery system that will find lost files in the darkest caverns of a damaged drive. You'll also find improved performance on key features like disk optimization. Simply put, TechTool Pro 3 is the most complete and powerful troubleshooting utility available for your computer. Why settle for anything less?

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* This is a dramatization. Do not attempt to plug box into game console. Silly doll box not available in stores.™

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